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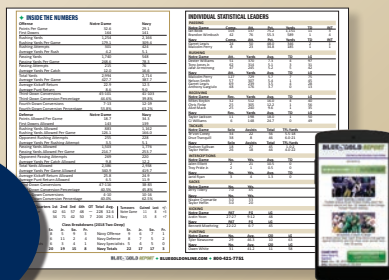
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PHOTO BY SPENCER ALLEN

# PERFECT NOVEMBER

Chase Claypool's two receiving scores help the Irish cap 5-0 month with a 45-24 win at Stanford

♦ STARTS ON PAGE 20



PHOTO BY ANDRIS VISOCKIS

## A FULL BACK

Senior Tony Jones Jr.'s versatility aids Fighting Irish backfield

♦ PAGE 16

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THE NEXT ISSUE OF BLUE & GOLD ILLUSTRATED WILL BE MAILED ON DEC. 19

## 2019 NOTRE DAME FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Sept. 2	Sept. 14	Sept. 21	Sept. 28	Oct. 5	Oct. 12	Nov. 9	Nov. 2	Nov. 9	Nov. 16	Nov. 23	Nov. 30
Louisville	New Mexico	Georgia	Virginia	Bowling Green	USC	Michigan	Virginia Tech	Duke	Navy	Boston College	Stanford

# Notre Dame's Scheduling Is Stuck In The Muck

**T**he fact that Notre Dame recently ended its 46-year, 273-game sellout streak of home football games may seem like a big deal to some — as it should — because like a colonoscopy, this development provides early detection to a bigger problem.

A new streak of non-sellouts began Nov. 16 with the Navy game and extended to two games Nov. 23 when plenty of good seats remained available for the Boston College matchup.

In a statement released to *The South Bend Tribune* and *The Indianapolis Star*, Notre Dame athletics director Jack Swarbrick outlined a couple reasons why he believes this sellout streak, that dated back to the Richard Nixon presidency, finally came to an end.

"That this comes during a time of sustained success for our football program reflects both challenges impacting the ticket market nationwide and the unique dynamics of this year's schedule," Swarbrick said, in part.

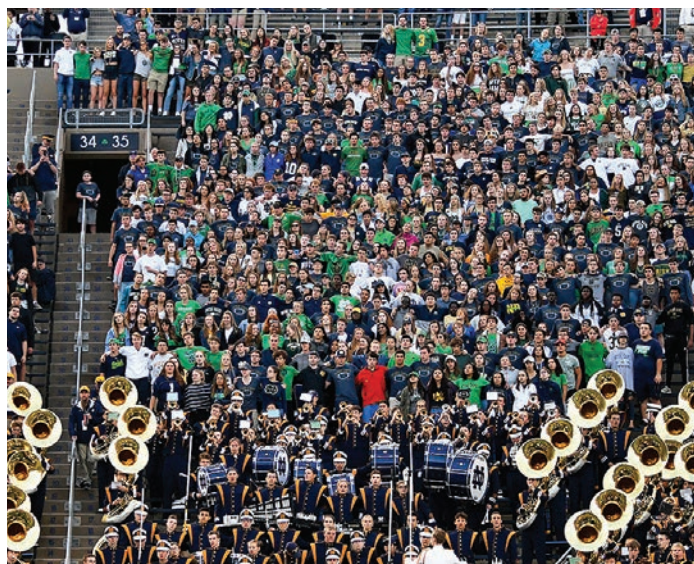
One of the "unique dynamics," that Swarbrick theorized about, in a subsequent interview with *The South Bend Tribune*, is that having three November home football games this season diluted ticket demand.

What Swarbrick failed to reference is how these non-sellouts are going to become more the rule than the exception, in part, because of the scheduling constraints Notre Dame football faces as a moonlighting member of the Atlantic Coast Conference.

When the ACC agreed to bring in all of the Notre Dame athletic programs other than football and hockey for the 2013-14 school year, its league officials asked in return that Swarbrick's football program play five of its 12 regular-season games every year against their conference teams.

The agreement seemed reasonable and it worked well in the early years.

ACC members Florida State and Miami had a rivaled history with Notre Dame. And with 15 schools situated up and down the Eastern



**Notre Dame's 2020 home football schedule is headlined by powerhouse Clemson, but that may be the only marquee opponent coming to South Bend. The others are: Arkansas (2-9 this year), Western Michigan (7-4), Stanford (4-7), Duke (4-7) and Louisville (7-4).**

PHOTO BY ANDRIS VISOCKIS

Seaboard, and in metro areas such as Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Boston and Louisville, the Notre Dame name and brand would grow and strengthen.

The downside to this relationship was that regional rivalries against teams such as Michigan, Michigan State and Purdue were placed on the endangered list in favor of games against Wake Forest, Duke, Virginia, North Carolina, North Carolina State and other unfamiliar foes.

This five-game ACC agreement contributed this season to Notre Dame having the least enticing home schedule for Irish fans in decades, which contributed to indifference, which resulted in empty seats.

Because ACC football isn't any good beyond Clemson, this conference tie-in puts Notre Dame in a tough place as it tries to win a national title as an independent program. Simply put, the Irish must go undefeated to even be considered for a playoff berth.

Swarbrick cannot be blamed for not trying to schedule above and beyond this five-game ACC constraint. His Irish just finished up home-and-home series with Michigan and Georgia. Ohio State is slated for a there-then-here two-pack against Notre Dame in 2022-23, and Wisconsin is on board in '21 and '22 for a neutral-site doubleheader.

But as the college football landscape quickly evolves, Notre Dame's scheduling philosophy must also, and that starts with rethinking the value of playing Navy and Stanford every year, because the ACC games provide little oomph.

Ditching these two annual games would provide Swarbrick some needed scheduling flexibility to wiggle out of this ACC straitjacket to build a better postseason profile, even without a conference championship game.

And with schedules built years in advance, this is not an easy or overnight fix for Swarbrick.

But Notre Dame's schedule must start providing more than one or two power

games every year. Georgia and Michigan made up the short list this season.

And in 2020, the schedule includes Duke, Georgia Tech, Louisville, Pittsburgh, Wake Forest, Western Michigan, etc. — you can go ahead and pencil the Irish in again for at least 10 wins.

Wisconsin at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wis., and a home game against Clemson are the two marquee matchups on the 2020 slate.

Take away Clemson's 11-0 record, and entering games on the final weekend in November, Notre Dame's other five home opponents in 2020 — Arkansas (2-9), Western Michigan (7-4), Stanford (4-7), Duke (4-7), and Louisville (7-4) — were a combined 24-31, not an ideal lineup to start another extended streak of stadium sellouts.

This five-game relationship with the ACC seemed like a good idea upon conception. But if Notre Dame wants to put butts in the seats and put itself in better playoff position, it's time to look beyond scheduling status quo, even if some longstanding series end and some feelings are hurt along the way. ♦



**Todd D. Burlage has been a writer for *Blue & Gold Illustrated* since July 2005. He can be reached at [tburlage@blueandgold.com](mailto:tburlage@blueandgold.com)**





Quarterback Ian Book is among the seniors with a potential fifth year of eligibility remaining in 2020. The Faculty Board of Athletics at Notre Dame has to approve all such fifth-year requests.

PHOTO BY ANDRIS VISOCKIS

## TAKING THE FIFTH

When a football player is invited to participate for a fifth year, I assume that player has graduated and thus, would enroll as a graduate student.

What happens if the student-athlete is not admitted academically as a graduate student at Notre Dame? For example, if the player graduates with a 2.4 GPA, he would surely not be "admittable."

*Christopher Kashnig '72  
Madison, Wis.*

*Mr. Kashnig, the Faculty Board of Athletics at Notre Dame has to approve three areas of the team: schedule, captains and fifth-year players.*

*With schedules, football is fairly cut and dry, but in other sports where games are played on weekdays, the premium has been placed on not missing more than three class days a semester because of travel.*

*Before captains are approved in football, or any sport, the board reviews his academic standing, and he must keep his grade point average at a level of which they approve.*

*The same applies to admittance for a fifth year in graduate school. He must first earn his undergraduate degree, and be in satisfactory standing. That is part of why the university does not make any*

*formal announcements on who is returning before they actually do come back that following preseason.*

*However, if someone like quarterback Ian Book is practicing in the spring of 2020, there is a safe assumption that as long as academic standing is good and there are no off-the-field transgressions, he will be back.*

## TAKING ATTENDANCE

The last two Saturdays without selling out Notre Dame Stadium is, to me, a prefiguration of steady decline.

I know television dictates money, and kickoffs are set to accommodate the networks. However, as opposed to here in the Bay Area where competition for audiences is extremely

stiff, Notre Dame is the only game in town. Every game should sell out, especially because Notre Dame is a pretty darn good team.

Notre Dame is not located in a climate conducive to 3 p.m. starts, or later, from mid-October onward. And really late starts, like this year's USC game — which I did attend — are ridiculous.

Statistics show steady decline in attendance at college football games, for lots of reasons. I think the fans who attend the games deserve some consideration. Kickoff should be at noon. This is just a rant that I had to get off my chest. I know it won't happen.

*Woody Nedom  
Via the Internet*

## FROM THE WEB

There has been some divide on how Notre Dame's 2019 regular season is perceived. On one hand, not many Power Five schools finish 10-2. On the other, the losses against the two top teams on the slate — Georgia and Michigan — create a "Notre Dame hasn't beaten anyone really good" ennui. Here were a small sampling of thoughts on BlueandGold.com:

**MagicInTheName:** 33-6 over 3 years, with two bowl wins over quality opponents and one playoff appearance, would represent a stellar success for the program given the last 25 years. The next three need to include more marquee wins.

**FightingVac:** We were homeless a few years ago. Now we have a very nice condo in a good school district but are bitching about not having a mansion in Beverly Hills.

**Rockne1988:** Since that horrific 2016 season, it's been a pretty good run, but the Miami debacle, losing to Georgia twice, still not beating a ranked team on the road, Michigan this year and the Clemson beatdown still has people concerned and questioning a few things in regard to the program/Brian Kelly.

**Vonteego:** Notre Dame is the ONLY legit top 10 team playing real schedules, with real students, with real standards academically and behaviorally. Period.

**NDorBust:** It's a weird translation for ND and it's fan base once again. If we went 10-2 during the Ty Willingham and Charlie Weis eras, we'd have ticker-tape parades. Hence Weis and 9-3 isn't good enough slogan, (going 9-3 was a big deal at the time).

Now we're accustomed to 10 wins plus 12-0



regular seasons mixed in. Playing for the championship in 2012 and being in the playoffs in 2018. Kelly has done a ton to turn ND around — and people won't realize it until we're going 7-5 and 8-4 again.

**Changel:** This has been a very good run for Kelly and the program, but it doesn't remind me of 1988-93 because we're not beating elite teams like we were then. Since the start of 2017 we've beat one team ranked in the top 10 at kickoff and that was Stanford in 2017 (which finished with four losses). Nothing about this team reminds me of the teams we saw during those years that could take down elite opponents.

**Polaris6:** ND finishing in the top 10 each year is all I can ask for and what I consider their ceiling. Even with the great record last three years, I don't see this team as top 10 unless they beat a top 10 opponent.

**Wlk277:** ND has top 3-5 OL talent — but running the ball in big games has literally not been an option. Kelly even said on his radio show this week that he thinks they are "doing well enough." Well enough is not acceptable. We need a coach to realize that changes need to be made during good times to avoid another Brian VanGorder Year 3 debacle (after going 10-3 in Year 2).

**Mgormal1:** The record is outstanding. I think it's the big game beatdowns that make it much less sweet and sometimes bitter. If we lost to Clemson 21-3 or Miami 24-10 or Michigan 31-14, it would be much different. Can't get steamrolled on the biggest stages three years in a row.

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# UNDER THE DOME

BY LOU SOMOGYI

**A**mong Notre Dame's 22-man scholarship freshman class signed in the 2019 recruiting cycle, three had major roles while the other 19 preserved a fifth season of eligibility by not playing in more than four games (if any).

That doesn't mean all 19 will return for a fifth season with the Fighting Irish in 2023.

Chances are the total won't even reach half that, with Notre Dame generally carrying four to eight fifth-year players on scholarship. This year it was slot Chris Finke, offensive lineman Trevor Ruhland, linebacker Asmar Bilal and cornerback Shaun Crawford.

Here is the breakdown of the 22-man class in 2019 prior to the game at Stanford Nov. 30.

## PLAYED MAJOR ROLES (3)

**Punter Jay Bramblett, safety Kyle Hamilton and defensive tackle Jacob Lacey**

Bramblett started every game and responded well in his rookie season. Through 11 games, his 53 punts had only 65 yards in returns, and 16 times the opponent had to start inside its 20-yard line.

Plus, the former high school star quarterback's best play came as a holder when he calmly handled a low snap and positioned the ball well for junior Jonathan Doerer to kick the winning extra point in the closing seconds of the 21-20 win versus Virginia Tech.

In a part-time role, Hamilton not only led the team in interceptions with four — second most ever by an Irish freshman, behind Luther Bradley's six in 1973 — but was second in passes defended (five) and seventh in tackles (35). Everything about him spells future All-American.

Lacey averaged 21 snaps per game in the 10 contests he appeared and was well advanced beyond his years physically and mentally.

"He's so smart as a football player," head coach Brian Kelly praised. "Very rarely does he make a mistake in terms of his alignment in his assignment. He was a very talented

## ROOKIE REPORT

### Freshmen playing time was used judiciously in 2019 to preserve eligibility



**Freshman safety Kyle Hamilton led the team in interceptions (four), was second in passes defended (five) and was seventh in tackles (35) through 11 games.**

PHOTO BY ANDREW VISOCKIS

player coming in, and a lot of these guys usually are.

"But some of the things that they can't translate early on are the complexity of what we're doing, moving the fronts, lining correctly. He's impeccable in the assignment-related things that the defensive line has to do ... There's a lot of trust with Jacob Lacey."

## PLAYED FOUR GAMES AND THEN SAT (7)

**Running back Kyren Williams, offensive linemen Zeke Correll and Andrew Kristofic, defensive tackle Howard Cross III, linebackers Jack Kiser and Marist Liufau, and cornerback KJ Wallace**

The goal was to get a taste of playing time that was earned without relinquishing a season of eligibility.

Williams played in the first four contests, carrying four times for 26 yards, catching one pass for three yards and returning two kickoffs for 35 yards.

Kiser and Liufau were standouts in the preseason to the point that the coaching staff wanted them on spe-

cial teams. Kiser started on special teams the first four games, and Liufau made such a strong impression that he was specifically used against four of the best foes on the schedule: Georgia, Virginia, USC and Michigan.

Once Cross played his fourth game (Nov. 16 versus Navy), he was cut off from any more action. In the 40-7 win versus Boston College the next week, fellow freshman tackle Hunter Spears was used in his place because it was only the third game for Spears, who played 15 snaps versus the Eagles.

## PLAYED LESS THAN FOUR GAMES (8)

**Defensive end Isaiah Foskey (3), cornerback Cam Hart (3), defensive tackle Hunter Spears (3), safety Litchfield Ajavon (2), linebacker JD Bertrand (2), quarterback Brendon Clark (2), linebacker Osita Ekwonu (2) and defensive end NaNa Osafo-Mensah (2)**

Most of the game action came in the romps versus New Mexico (66-14) and Bowling Green (52-0).

In the case of Foskey, injuries at defensive end to Daelin Hayes and Julian Okwara also resulted in him playing at Duke. The staff did not use him against run-oriented teams Navy and Boston College during blowouts because they wanted to use his fourth and final game against a passing team such as Stanford.

"We think he can be a very special player," Kelly said of Foskey the week of the Stanford game. "We feel like the pass rush is going to be very, very important. ... We think he can influence the pass rush for us in a positive way."

## DID NOT PLAY THIS SEASON (4)

**Wide receiver Kendall Abdur-Rahman, offensive tackle Quinn Carroll, offensive guard John Olmstead and cornerback Isaiah Rutherford**

Carroll tore his ACL in the first week of August training camp. ♦



## Five Questions With ... NOTRE DAME JUNIOR HOCKEY DEFENSESMAN MATT HELLICKSON

Looking back just a few short years, Notre Dame junior Matt Hellickson can't believe how quickly his time on campus and his amateur hockey career are flying by.

Five years ago, Hellickson was wrapping up his prep hockey career at Rogers High School in Rogers, Minn., before a three-year whirlwind tour took him to stops on the Under-17 and Under-18 U.S. National Teams through the U.S. Hockey National Team Development Program; to Sioux City, Iowa, for a season in the USHL; and then eventually to Notre Dame in 2017.

Hellickson — a seventh-round selection by the New Jersey Devils in the 2017 NHL Draft — was just a Notre Dame freshman in 2017, but still became a regular contributor on the 2017-18 Irish team that won the Big Ten regular-season and tournament championships and eventually played in the national championship game.

Hellickson skated in all 40 games last season, recording four goals and 12 assists. And now in his third season at Notre Dame, he's leading a group of young Irish defensemen on a team that already has six come-from-behind wins this season en route to an 8-2-2 record through Nov. 27.

**BGI:** Scoring is so difficult in hockey, how do you keep the right mindset when you're trailing in a game?

**Hellickson:** "If we're down one or two goals, we don't really let that affect us on the bench. We



**Hellickson helped the Fighting Irish get off to an 8-2-2 start this season, anchoring the team's defense and contributing five points (two goals and three assists).**

PHOTO COURTESY FIGHTING IRISH MEDIA

still have a really upbeat attitude.

"Until that final buzzer goes off, I think we always know in the back of our heads that we have a chance to win."

**BGI:** Once you complete a couple of comeback wins, can that build the team's confidence to do it again?

**Hellickson:** "Oh definitely. We were down 3-2 to Wisconsin [Nov. 16], Cal Burke, our captain was saying, 'Hey, we've been here before, we've done it once, we can do it again.'

"And that sort of mentality helps us definitely. We came back and won that game."

**BGI:** What goes into being a good comeback team?

**Hellickson:** "This year's team, based on my experiences from previous teams during my freshman and sophomore years, what I think we're really good at is being resilient, we have really good emotional control on the bench and I think that is one thing that really helps us be the comeback kids."

**BGI:** You guys are off to a great start. What are your thoughts on how the defense is playing so far this season?

**Hellickson:** "I really like how our D-corps is playing as a whole right now, especially the young guys. I think we move really well as a D-corps."

"It's really exciting to see and I'm really looking forward to continuing the season with those guys."

**BGI:** Among the young defenseman, anybody stand out so far?

**Hellickson:** "I think [sophomore] Nate Clurman, he's really coming into his own using his body, using his feet, and then the same with [sophomores] Charlie Raith and Nick Leivermann."

"Both of those guys obviously didn't play too much last year, but this year they've just shown that they have a lot of confidence and they have a lot of poise with the puck. They make a lot of really good plays."

— Todd D. Burlage

## Point ♦ Counterpoint:

### IS IT A BIG DEAL NOTRE DAME DIDN'T SELL OUT ITS LAST TWO HOME GAMES THIS SEASON?

#### Non-Sellouts Are A Symptom To A Bigger Problem

By Todd Burlage

The idea that Notre Dame failed to sell out a football game for the first time since 1973 stands as a big deal all by itself, especially with everything the university has done to attract fans through an improved game-day experience at the stadium.

Video boards, wider seating, improved concessions and an entertaining football team riding an 18-game home winning streak seem like plenty of reasons as to why Notre Dame should never have a problem filling its 77,622 seats six or seven times a year.

But it did have a problem selling tickets for both the Navy and Boston College games. And a lack of elite opponents on the home schedule for years to come will undoubtedly bring additional apathy and more empty seats.

Notre Dame director of athletics Jack Swarbrick said in a story in *The South Bend Tribune* that he's not overly concerned with the 273-game streak coming to an end. He believes the anomaly of having three November home games was the primary reason for the sellout streak ending.

In actuality, it was a lack of quality home opponents. Notre Dame was at least a 10-point favorite in six of its seven home games this season, and three times it was a 20-plus point favorite.

And with Irish schedules finalized out to 2021 and nothing other than the Clemson game in 2020 to get excited about, expect non-sellouts to become more the norm. That's a really big deal, and one that will have to be addressed through better scheduling, not through more concession options or brighter video boards.

#### Empty Seats Not A Surprise Nor A Red Flag

By Lou Somogyi

The sellout streak of 273 straight games that Notre Dame liked to publicize for decades had an element of fudging to it for quite a while now. Director of athletics Jack Swarbrick admitted himself to *The South Bend Tribune* that there were "creative" ways to continue the streak, sort of like manipulating a golf score with some mulligans along the way.

Let's not forget that until 1997, prior to the expansion, the standard capacity at Notre Dame Stadium was a modest 59,075. Compared to other powerful programs that generally seated at least 80,000 and some beyond 100,000, it was quite small.

But as a private school with an enrollment of only about 8,000 students compared to state schools with four, five, six or more times that number, it was quaint and maybe even apropos, much like the charm of powerhouse Duke basketball's Cameron Indoor Stadium that seats only 9,314 (comparable to Notre Dame's 9,149).

Notre Dame Stadium expanded to nearly 81,000 before the widening of the seats, among other revisions, reduced it to its present 77,622. Even without the sellout number, I view it (at least for now) as getting about 15,000 more into the arena now than during many of its glory years. Times change, and drawing more than 70,000 in mid- and late-November non-competitive games is still pretty darn good from my vantage point.

When the numbers start to dwindle to less than 70,000 in September (even for New Mexico or Bowling Green) or 50,000 by November, then yes, there's a problem festering. If you win — and legitimately compete for titles — they will still come.



JACK SWARBRICK



## Pro Football Focus Snap Count Totals Vs. Boston College

BY MIKE SINGER

Here is the snap count breakdown for Notre Dame's 40-7 victory over Boston College Nov. 23:

Quarterbacks	BC	2019 Total
Ian Book	75	690
Phil Jurkovec	11	75
Brendon Clark	—	19
Nolan Henry	1	2

Running Backs	BC	2019 Total
Tony Jones Jr.	56	387
Jafar Armstrong	2	156
Jahmir Smith	9	112
C'Bo Flemister	17	100
Avery Davis	12	67
Kyren Williams	—	15
Mick Assaf	3	10
Cameron Ekanayake	—	2

Wide Receivers	BC	2019 Total
Chase Claypool	73	612
Chris Finke	64	576
Javon McKinley	—	231
Lawrence Keys III	40	226
Braden Lenzy	23	159
Michael Young	—	85
Joe Wilkins Jr.	13	68
Micah Jones	—	43
Arion Shinaver	12	34
Greg Mailey	—	6
Leo Albano	—	3
Matt Salerno	—	3

Tight Ends	BC	2019 Total
Cole Kmet	72	578
Tommy Tremble	14	256
Brock Wright	13	127
George Takacs	9	50
John Lager	1	6
Jack Henige	—	4
Xavier Lezynski	2	2

Offensive Line	BC	2019 Total
Aaron Banks	87	718
Jarrett Patterson	84	715
Liam Eichenberg	75	706
Robert Hainsey	—	423

Tommy Kraemer	—	378
Trevor Ruhland	75	368
Joshua Lugg	84	341
Dillan Gibbons	12	75
Colin Grunhard	—	57
John Dirksen	3	43
Logan Plantz	12	40
Andrew Kristofic	—	25
Cole Mabry	—	24
Zeke Correll	3	13

**Note:** Offense walk-ons Henry, Assaf, Shinaver, Lager, Lezynski and Plantz all were able to make an appearance on the field in their final home game.

Defensive Linemen	Run Snaps	Pass Snaps	BC Total	2019 Total
Khalid Kareem	17	21	38	466
Myron Tagovailoa-Amosa	14	11	25	443
Julian Okwara	—	—	—	406
Kurt Hinish	17	15	32	367
Jamir Jones	14	25	39	263
Adetokunbo Ogundeji	10	19	29	252
Jayson Ademilola	—	—	—	196
Jacob Lacey	10	16	26	211
Ovie Oghoufo	17	7	24	101
Daelin Hayes	—	—	—	97
Ja'Mion Franklin	16	8	24	91
Justin Ademilola	8	4	12	71
Howard Cross III	—	—	—	65
Hunter Spears	11	4	15	25
Isaiah Foskey	—	—	—	22
NaNa Osafo-Mensah	—	—	—	10
Kofi Wardlow	2	0	2	9

**Notes:** Franklin played a career-high 24 snaps and graded out well, per head coach Brian Kelly ... Spears made his third appearance of the season and played a career-high 15 snaps.

Linebackers	Run Snaps	Pass Snaps	BC Total	2019 Total
Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah	29	20	49	584
Asmar Bilal	29	31	60	547
Drew White	29	20	49	522
Paul Moala	6	2	8	103
Shayne Simon	—	—	—	90
Bo Bauer	4	1	5	91
Jack Lamb	—	—	—	87
Jordan Genmark Heath	6	2	8	75

**Note:** Bilal, who received the game ball, played the most snaps on defense with 60.

Defensive Backs	Run Snaps	Pass Snaps	BC Total	2019 Total
Troy Pride Jr.	21	20	41	621
Alohi Gilman	22	25	47	587
Jalen Elliott	22	29	51	575
TaRiq Bracy	20	19	39	398
Kyle Hamilton	10	17	27	341
Shaun Crawford	11	22	33	302
Donte Vaughn	6	11	17	268
Houston Griffith	4	1	5	104
DJ Brown	4	1	5	75
KJ Wallace	—	—	—	18
Temitope Agoro	4	1	5	17
Patrick Pelini	—	—	—	9
Cam Hart	—	—	—	3

**Note:** Agoro, who has been a regular on special teams, played five snaps on defense in his final home game.



Junior left guard Aaron Banks played all 87 offensive snaps against the Eagles.

PHOTO BY ANDREW VISOCKIS



## ◆ BY THE NUMBERS

**4** Notre Dame football seniors who have accepted invitations to play in the annual Reese's Senior Bowl, which will be held Jan. 25 at Mobile, Ala.: wide receiver Chase Claypool, defensive end Khalid Kareem, cornerback Troy Pride Jr. and safety Jalen Elliott.

**6** Consecutive games to open her college career that Notre Dame freshman forward **SAM BRUNELLE** scored in double figures — the first player to do so in the program's history that dates back to 1977-78. During the 4-2 start and prior to the Cancun Challenge Nov. 28-30 with three games in three days over Thanksgiving weekend, Brunelle and sophomore guard Katlyn Gilbert paced the Irish in scoring with 15.3 points per contest.

In back-to-back fourth-quarter comeback wins versus Toledo (54-51) Nov. 20 and at No. 21 Michigan (76-72) Nov. 23, Brunelle thrived in the closing minutes, finishing with 19 points and 13 rebounds versus the Rockets, and then scoring nine of her 12 points in the final minutes versus the Wolverines.

**29** Games in a row Notre Dame won against unranked opposition from Oct. 13, 1990, until losing 30-11 at Boston College on Oct. 8, 1994. That is the longest such streak by the Fighting Irish since the advent of the Associated Press poll in 1936. Moving into second place with 22 after defeating Boston College Nov. 23 was this year's Notre Dame team that has not fallen to an unranked team since the 34-31 loss to Virginia Tech at home on Nov. 19, 2016.

Head coach Frank Leahy's 1946-48 units had 21 straight before a tie at USC in the 1948 season finale. Head coach Ara Parseghian had two Notre Dame teams put together 17- and 16-game winning streaks from 1968-70 and 1966-68, respectively.

**35** Victories by former Notre Dame head coach Bob Davie at New Mexico in his eight seasons from 2012-19 before coming to a mutual decision with the school to resign after a health scare earlier this season prevented him from making the trip to South Bend for the Sept. 14 game with the Irish. The 35 victories matched his 35 at Notre Dame from 1997-2001, but he was 35-63 with the Lobos prior to his finale versus Utah State Nov. 30.

Davie led the moribund program to a 9-4 finish in 2016, but was unable to sustain that success with 3-9, 3-9 and 2-9 records the past three seasons, including a 2-21 mark in the Mountain West Conference. No Notre Dame coach ever posted a winning career mark at another university after getting fired or resigning his post with the Fighting Irish, although in fairness most took over programs that were significantly down:

- Hunk Anderson — 11-17-1 at North Carolina State (1934-36)
- Gerry Faust — 43-53-3 at Akron (1986-94)
- Lou Holtz — 33-37 at South Carolina (1999-2004)
- Bob Davie — 35-63 at New Mexico (2012-19, with one game left)
- Ty Willingham — 11-37 at Washington (2005-08)
- Charlie Weis — 6-22 at Kansas (2012-14)

**800** Career games coached by 20th-year Notre Dame men's basketball coach Mike Brey when his Fighting Irish host UCLA Dec. 14. This includes his five-year stint at the University of Delaware from 1995-2000 (99-52) prior to accepting the Notre Dame position. Santa Clara's Herb Sendek is scheduled to reach the 800-game mark on the same day as Brey, and they will become the 24th and 25th active coaches to reach 800 career games.

**71,827** Officially listed attendance for this year's home finale versus Boston College Nov. 23, or 2,253 less than the game versus Navy a week earlier when Notre Dame "officially" did not sell out a home game for the first time since the Thanksgiving Day game versus Air Force in 1973, a span of 273 contests.

The total against the Eagles was the lowest in the now official capacity of 77,622 since the expansion of the stadium in 1997. From 1974-96, the familiar figure of 59,075 was the official sellout number.

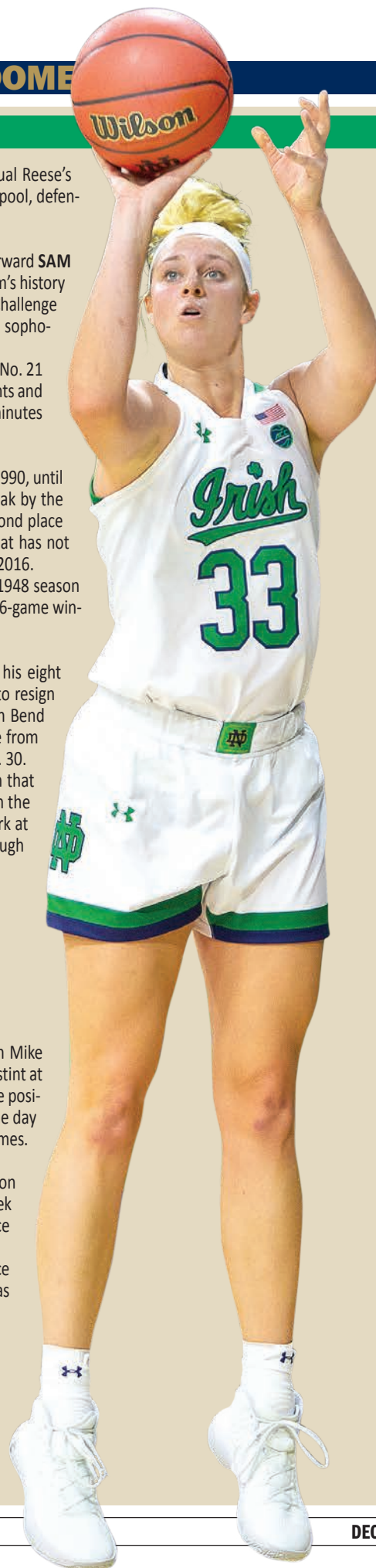


PHOTO BY MIKE MILLER

# Kevin Austin Is Among The Sophomore Wideouts Needed In 2020

Throughout head coach Brian Kelly's 10-year tenure, no single position has won more Team MVP awards than wide receiver: Michael Floyd (2010-11), TJ Jones (2013), Will Fuller (2015), and possibly Chase Claypool in 2019.

Plus, Equanimeous St. Brown turned pro after his junior season in 2017, and Miles Boykin became a third-round selection after a superb 2018 campaign.

Who will be the standout to carry the torch into the next decade?

Speedster Braden Lenzy? Would Javon McKinley return for a fifth season and another try? How much can 2020 five-star recruit Jordan Johnson help?

If all business is taken care of off the field through next spring, summer and August, then the answer just might be current sophomore wide receiver Kevin Austin, who is on an "unofficial" season-long suspension, but he has remained in school and starred for the scout team.

"Our defensive coaches feel like he's the best player over there, and he's been outstanding in everything that we've asked him to do," Kelly said when asked about the progress of the 6-2, 210-pound Coconut Creek, Fla., native the week of the regular-season finale at Stanford. "Every challenge that has been put in front of him, and he's had numerous — and I repeat, numerous.

"He has succeeded at each one of those challenges. Good things on the horizon for him."

With Claypool and Chris Finke out of eligibility after this season and junior Michael Young transferring, Austin will be counted on to make a significant impact in 2020. Ranked as the No. 88 overall player nationally by Rivals in 2018, he was the top prospect among the five sophomore wideouts signed that season, joining Lenzy, Lawrence Keys III, Joe Wilkins and Micah Jones.

No one in that group was more physically ready to compete at this level than Austin, who snagged five passes for



Austin has remained in school and starred for the scout team while serving an "unofficial" season-long suspension this year.

PHOTO BY BILL PANZICA

90 yards as a 2018 freshman while the other four redshirted.

Through 11 games in 2019, Keys grabbed 12 passes for 126 yards, but Lenzy's game-breaking speed has caught far more attention. His eight catches have averaged 24.9 yards, highlighted by a 70-yard touchdown versus Navy, and on jet sweeps he's had 51- and 61-yard scoring gallops versus USC and Boston College, respectively.

Also expected to compete in track, Lenzy skipped that sport last spring because of the realization he had to get much stronger to compete at the collegiate level in football. Even in 2019, some injuries, including a concussion and what Kelly labeled as "fatigue," have held him back.

Lenzy admitted he was more in the 160-pound range as a freshman, but by skipping track and intently devoting himself to the strength and conditioning program under Matt Balis, he at one point was up to 183 pounds.

"Last year changed my mindset," Lenzy said. "I realized I had to do a lot more, I couldn't just be 'the fast guy.' Even though I am the fast guy, there are a lot of parts of my game that have vastly improved. I realized you can't come to college to do one thing. You have to do a lot because everyone is good.

"Last year I was happy. We were 12-0 and in the college playoff. I was extremely excited and I honestly took a lot of pride being on the scout team because I felt I really helped that defense — and now it's really cool to help out the offense."

Speed kills ...but it has to be augmented by football strength and savvy as well.

"Last year it was very difficult for me to even go with the twos," Lenzy said. "From a football standpoint, I wasn't ready, clear, cut and dry.

"Now I stand out in the games ... I need to do what Notre Dame goes by — be gritty every day."

— Lou Somogyi

## Injury Report

- Senior wide receiver Javon McKinley was not listed on the two-deep chart released by Notre Dame for the Stanford finale. He suffered a foot injury at Duke Nov. 9.

- Sophomore defensive tackle Jayson Ademilola has been evaluated day to day after incurring an ankle sprain versus Navy Nov. 16. He was withheld from action versus Boston College Nov. 23 after struggling in warm-ups, but there was more optimism that he would be ready to see some action at Stanford Nov. 30.

- Head coach Brian Kelly indicated that senior right guard Tommy Kraemer, who suffered a knee sprain at Michigan Oct. 26, has been pretty much ruled out from playing in a bowl game too. The hope is he will be cleared for full work in the spring.

— Lou Somogyi



Senior right guard Tommy Kraemer's knee sprain is expected to keep him out of Notre Dame's bowl game.

PHOTO BY ANDRIS VISOCKIS



## UNDER THE DOME THEY SAID IT

"Obviously, you can't beat the stadium. The moments we've had here, the games we've played here have been amazing. This game was special for me, being able to sing the Alma Mater at the end was great, and I just thank God for this opportunity." — *Notre Dame senior safety Alohi Gilman after Notre Dame's final home game against Boston College (WNDU)*

"Notre Dame athletics director Jack Swarbrick partially attributed the streak's demise to the three November home games against fairly ho-hum opposition: Virginia Tech, Navy and BC. Indeed, *The South Bend Tribune's* Eric Hansen pointed out that this is unusual for the Irish, who have played as many as three November home games just four times since Notre Dame expanded its stadium 22 years ago.

"It was much easier for Swarbrick to off load a bunch of unsold tickets to a friend of the program and convince fans to brave frigid conditions for a boring game — thereby extending the sellout streak — when he had to do it only once per November. And yet the inconvenient schedule and weather are far from the only issues involved here. College football attendance has been sagging for years. According to the NCAA's official attendance figures, average FBS home attendance fell in 2018 for the seventh time in the last eight seasons, from 42,108 in 2017 to 41,509 last year. That represented a drop of more than 10 percent from the 2008 peak of 46,456." — *David Ching, a senior contributor to Forbes*

"It's not just on offense. It's defense, too. We want to continue to look at speed at the defensive back position. Speed at the running back position and wide receiver position. All those skill positions, we have to continue to aggressively recruit that position of speed. Make-up speed in particular at the cornerback position is one of the traits that can overcome a lot.

"The charge that I've given Coach [Brian] Polian and the recruiting staff is to let's not get too caught up on what position they play; let's really focus in on that speed element and those position groups because I think that's got some room for growth within our program." — *Notre Dame head coach Brian Kelly on the importance of recruiting and developing players with speed*

"The Fighting Irish have a bright future with Hamilton roaming the back end of their defense. He recorded four total tackles against Boston College and saw three passes come his way as the primary coverage defender. Allowing just one reception for seven yards, Hamilton broke up another and intercepted the third pass his way to see just a 2.8 passer rating into his coverage." — *Cam Mellor of Pro Football Focus on Notre Dame freshman safety Kyle Hamilton*

"All things considered, I think a pretty good season for the Irish." — *Ty Hildenbrandt, host of the college football podcast The Solid Verbal*

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The official account of the Notre Dame Football program (@NDFootball) Nov. 25

## CHARTING THE IRISH NICE SCENERY

From coast to coast, the United States is covered with gorgeous college campuses, and they come in all shapes and sizes. Some of these campuses belong to large public universities, while others are home to small liberal arts colleges.

Based on a list of the 100 Most Beautiful College Campuses from BestCollegeReviews.org, Notre Dame has the fifth most aesthetically pleasing school grounds in the country. It ranks just behind the University of Chicago and Bryn Mawr (located in Pennsylvania) for the most beautiful college campus in the Midwest.

The lone 2019 Fighting Irish opponent to appear higher on the list is the Virginia Cavaliers, which topped the list as the most beautiful college campus in America. Also in the top 20 is Stanford University at No. 14.

Three other Notre Dame opponents are on the list, all of which are private institutions. Duke University checks in at No. 29. At No. 58 is Boston College and, toward the bottom of the list at No. 80 is the University of Southern California.

### MOST BEAUTIFUL COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Per BestCollegeReviews.org

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  9. Berry College
  10. Amherst College
  14. Stanford University\*
  29. Duke University\*
  58. Boston College\*
  80. University of Southern California\*
- \* 2019 Irish opponent

## Getting To Know ... JUNIOR DEFENSIVE TACKLE MYRON TAGOVAILOA-AMOSA

**Hometown:** Ewa Beach, Hawai'i

**High school:** Kapolei

**Major:** Marketing

**Favorite food:** "Ahi, it is a type of large tuna that is usually seared fresh."

**Favorite movie:** "One of my all-time favorite movies is 'The Passion of the Christ.'"

**Favorite music:** "I like to listen to R&B."

**Favorite musician:** "You can't go wrong with Luther Vandross."

**Favorite TV show:** "I really like 'This Is Us.'"

**Greatest football memory:** "In seventh and eighth grade, I was the QB and had a QB sneak for 50 yards. Unfortunately, I got tackled before the end zone."

**Who is your idol:** "My grandfather is my idol."

**Favorite part about playing for Notre Dame:** "Every time I hear the kickoff song — 'Here Come the Irish.'"

**Toughest player you've ever faced:** "Going against Quenton Nelson and Mike McGlinchey every day in practice."



## ◆ GIMME FIVE

With his 4-of-4 performance on field goals during Notre Dame's 40-7 victory versus Boston College Nov. 23, Fighting Irish junior Jonathan Doerer continued his excellence as the first-year starting placekicker while succeeding the record-breaking, four-year starter Justin Yoon.

Entering the regular-season finale at Stanford Nov. 30, Doerer was 12 of 14 (85.7 percent) on field goal attempts. Particularly outstanding was his 3-of-3 output on field goals in the hard-fought 30-27 victory versus USC Oct. 12. All three came from beyond 40 yards, which made him only the second kicker in school history to convert three field goals from at least 40 yards in the same game (Dave Reeve was the other in the 16-6 win versus Michigan State in 1977).

A native of Charlotte, N.C., Doerer was on pace to have one of the most accurate seasons ever at Notre Dame with respect to field goal kicking. Here are the top five, with a minimum of 15 attempts required to qualify:

Rk.	Kicker (Year)	FG	Pct.
1.	David Ruffer (2010)	18-19	.947
2.	John Carney (1984)	17-19	.895
3.	Nicholas Setta (2001)	15-17	.882
	Justin Yoon (2015)	15-17	.882
5.	Mike Johnston (1982)	19-22	.864

## TOP OF THE CLASS

*Irish student-athletes excelling  
on the field and in the classroom*

### Kyle Hamilton — Football

The freshman safety from Atlanta was named to the Pro Football Focus Team of the Week for the second time this season following Notre Dame's 40-7 victory over Boston College Nov. 23. He was credited with three tackles and recorded his team-best fourth interception of the year against the Eagles.

Heading into the final weekend of the regular season, Hamilton's four picks were tied for 15th nationally and tied for first among freshmen.



### Anna Rohrer — Cross Country

The graduate student from Mishawaka, Ind., became the first four-time All-American in women's cross country program history, placing 17th to lead the Fighting Irish to a 15th-place team finish.

Rohrer ran with the lead pack throughout the 6K course, finishing in 20:28.3. It was the culmination of her collegiate cross country career, ending on the same course she grew up on as a high school runner in Indiana.



### Destinee Walker — Basketball

The graduate transfer from North Carolina put together her best game in an Irish uniform, helping Notre Dame rally for a 76-72 victory at No. 21 Michigan Nov. 23. She scored a season-high 27 points and equaled her career best with five made three-pointers.

In her first six games with the Irish, Walker was averaging 15.0 points, 4.7 rebounds and 2.2 steals in 35.9 minutes per outing.



### Zac Yeadon — Swimming

The junior from San Antonio recorded a time of 14:32.48 en route to winning the 1,650 freestyle at the Ohio State Invitational Nov. 23. The clocking represented an improvement of two seconds from his previous personal best and school record, and was the fastest time in the country by a wide margin.

In the process, Yeadon claimed the first NCAA A-Cut qualifying time for Notre Dame this season, clinching his spot at the NCAA Championships.



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## Anniversaries In Notre Dame Football History: December

### 45 Years Ago: Dec. 15, 1974

At an age when most football coaches just begin to reach their prime, 51-year-old Ara Parseghian officially announces in a hastily called Sunday night press conference he is resigning after 11 seasons at Notre Dame because he is "physically exhausted and emotionally drained."

The news breaks when Parseghian's successor Dan Devine, on the verge of getting fired by the Green Bay Packers after four seasons there, leaks the story to *Minneapolis Star Tribune* journalist Sid Hartman.

A week earlier Parseghian had informed Notre Dame executive vice president Rev. Ned Joyce, C.S.C., of the decision, and the plan was not to reveal his departure until after the Jan. 1, 1975 Orange Bowl versus 11-0 Alabama, whom Notre Dame had defeated a year earlier in the Sugar Bowl to capture the national championship.

Parseghian's career record of 95-17-4 (.836 win percentage) with the Fighting Irish is highlighted by consensus national titles in 1966 and 1973, and a shared one in his remarkable debut campaign in 1964 after the program had finished 2-7 a year earlier.

One day later, after the news of Parseghian's departure, Devine is officially announced as the new coach by Joyce. Devine had posted a glittering career college record of 120-40-4 in three seasons at Arizona State (27-3-1 from 1955-57) and Missouri (93-37-3 from 1958-70) before heading to the NFL.

Joyce had developed a friendship with Devine and met with him in 1963 when head coach Joe Kuharich abruptly resigned that March and freshman coach Hugh Devore was promoted to interim head coach. When Parseghian was hired that December, Joyce purportedly told Devine the next time the job opens it would be his, helping explain the quick transition in the coaching "search."

### 15 Years Ago: Dec. 13, 2004

New England Patriots offensive coordinator Charlie Weis becomes the first Notre Dame graduate (1978) named full-time head coach at his alma mater since Joe Kuharich in 1959.

After striking out on the sweepstakes for Utah head coach Urban Meyer and also considering former Notre Dame quarterback Tom Clements (1972-74), the school turns to Weis, who is on the threshold of seeing his organization win their third Super Bowl in four years. He will coach with the Patriots through the playoffs.

"You are going to have a hard-working, intelligent, nasty football team on the field because the attitude of the head coach will be permeated through the players," Weis said at the press conference introducing him as head coach. "And I hate to include the 'nasty,' but that is part of being a winning football team.

"... It comes down to X's and O's. To be honest with you, when it gets to that point, I think that's when we have the greatest advantage. ... If it comes down to everything being [even] and it's X's and O's, I have to believe we're going to win most of the time."



Upon being hired to be the head football coach of the Fighting Irish on Dec. 10, 2009, Brian Kelly said: "There is a football coach — and then there's the football coach at Notre Dame, because nobody, nobody does it like Notre Dame."

PHOTO BY JOE RAYMOND

### 10 Years Ago: Dec. 10, 2009

Named the consensus 2009 National Coach of the Year while leading the University of Cincinnati to a 12-0 record — and a missed Texas field goal away from playing Alabama for the national title — Brian Kelly is named the new Notre Dame football head coach. He replaces Charlie Weis, who was fired 10 days earlier with a 35-27 career record, 16-21 in his last three seasons, and four straight losses to end 2009.

Oklahoma head coach Bob Stoops reportedly was considered the top choice before the school turned to the 48-year-old Kelly.

"There is a football coach — and then there's the football coach at Notre Dame, because nobody, nobody does it like Notre Dame," Kelly said at his introduction. "... That is the mission of Notre Dame: excellence in academics and athletics, and I wanted that challenge, and I'm excited about that challenge — that you can do it both in the classroom and be prominent in the athletic arena, as well."

— Lou Somogyi

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If Ian Book returns to the Irish for a fifth-year season in 2020, he would be the first quarterback at Notre Dame to start three consecutive years since Jimmy Clausen (2007-09).

PHOTO BY ANDRIS VISOCKIS

eligible because of receiving their undergraduate degree at Notre Dame.

The majority of seniors will use the standard "I'll evaluate it after the season" company line when asked about future plans during the course of a football season. Behind closed doors, it's another matter.

"We've had conversations with a number of our players regarding what we think and what they think is in their best interests," head coach Brian Kelly said in late November, although he says that too is not for public consumption until the appropriate time.

The deadline to declare for the NFL Draft among underclassmen is Jan. 20.

Here is an overview of the 11 divided into three categories:

### QUARTERBACK IAN BOOK

This position stands on its own.

Every previous former Notre Dame starter (and even one reserve) under Kelly who had a fifth year of eligibility used it elsewhere: Dayne Crist at Kansas, Andrew Hendrix at Miami (Ohio), Everett Golson at Florida State, Malik Zaire at Florida and Wimbush at Central Florida.

Meanwhile, DeShone Kizer turned pro and was a second-round pick in

# ROSTER ENGINEERING

Decisions have to be made by or on 11 seniors who are eligible for a fifth season in 2020

BY LOU SOMOGYI

**B**etween Thanksgiving and the New Year, "roster engineering" is prevalent among college football teams.

At Notre Dame that will especially center on how many of the 11 current seniors eligible for a fifth season in 2020 will return.

Unless there are an inordinate number of scholarships available — which there are not for the Irish — the ones who return for a fifth season are individuals who have already been starters and are projected for a starting role.

The four fifth-year seniors who returned in 2019 — wide receiver Chris Finke, offensive guard Trevor Ruhland, linebacker Asmar Bilal and cornerback Shaun Crawford — all had previous starting or extensive playing experience.

Others who did as well but lost their top spots, such as quarterback Brandon Wimbush (Central Florida) and safety Devin Studstill (South Florida) opted to take their chances as graduate transfers at another school, where they were immediately

the NFL Draft following his junior season (with two years of eligibility remaining).

Book falls in between. Unlike Crist, Hendrix, Golson, Zaire and Wimbush, he would be the clear, undisputed starter returning for a fifth season, and would be the first quarterback at Notre Dame to start three consecutive years since Jimmy Clausen (2007-09). Yet unlike Kizer, Book likely would not be a high draft selection at this point.

Prior to this year's regular-season finale at Stanford, Book had completed 463 passes at a 63.4 percent clip for 5,621 yards and a 52-17 touchdown-interception ratio during his career. He also had rushed for 994 yards and eight touchdowns.

"I want him back, but that's not my decision," Kelly said after the victory versus Boston College. "But I'll certainly recruit him."

## Fifth- Or Sixth-Year Candidates

Quarterback Ian Book  
Running back Tony Jones Jr.  
Receiver Javon McKinley  
Left tackle Liam Eichenberg  
Right guard Tommy Kraemer  
Drop end Daelin Hayes  
Strong side end Ade Ogundejii  
Linebacker Jonathan Jones  
Cornerback/nickel Shaun Crawford  
Safety Alohi Gilman  
Long snapper John Shannon



Our guess is Book will return in 2020.

## 2020 CORNERSTONES

Four figures we project to be cornerstones in 2020 are on the offensive and defensive lines: left tackle Liam Eichenberg, right guard Tommy Kraemer, and defensive ends Daelin Hayes and Ade Ogundejí.

Eichenberg has publicly declared he plans to return with the rest of the offensive line that began the 2019 season, even though he probably could be a mid-round pick this spring. However, all his predecessors at left tackle under Kelly — Zack Martin, Ronnie Stanley and Mike McGlinchey — developed into first-round selections, with Martin and McGlinchey both staying for their fifth seasons.

Kraemer should be a lock, too, after suffering a season-ending sprained knee at Michigan Oct. 26. He had made huge improvement from 2018 and was even named a second-team Mid-Season All-American by the Associated Press prior to his injury.

On defense, despite stalwarts Khalid Kareem, Julian Okwara and Jamir Jones having exhausted their eligibility, the bookend tandem of Hayes (13 career starts) and Ogundejí (second-leading tackler along the line after 11 games this season) should provide excellent veteran experience, while promising youngsters such as Ovie Oghoufo, Justin Ademilola and Isaiah Foskey groom behind them.

Hayes, who suffered a season-ending shoulder injury against Virginia Sept. 28, has already declared on social media his intent to return. Ogundejí has kept the door open, but it would be a major surprise if he does not come back in 2020.

"He just has a great motor," Kelly said of Ogundejí. "He's long and relentless. He just has all those intangibles that you want, plus physicality, athleticism, length. He's fun to watch, and he's fun to have on the sidelines — he's always animated."

"Anytime he makes a play, he gets excited and gets the guys around him excited. He's just a joy to have on your team and watch him compete and play."

## ON THE BUBBLE

Based on our projections, the two least likely to return for a fifth season at Notre Dame would be linebacker

## Scholarship Numbers Crunching

While not all 11 seniors eligible for a fifth season in 2020 will return, here is the current breakdown of the roster by class year for next year:

- Eleven fifth-year seniors.
- Seventeen seniors. Tight end Cole Kmet indicated in November that his plan at the present was to return for his senior year instead of turning pro, while also playing baseball in the spring. Included in this class is Ohio State graduate transfer and safety Isaiah Pryor, who will enroll in January and be immediately eligible in 2020, with another season of eligibility in 2021.
- Twenty-four juniors. During the 2019 calendar year, there were three transfers from this class — cornerback Noah Boykin (to Massachusetts), center Luke Jones (Arkansas) and safety Derrik Allen (Georgia Tech).
- Twenty-two sophomores. Safety Kyle Hamilton, defensive tackle Jacob Lacey and punter Jay Bramblett were the standouts as freshmen.
- Seventeen freshmen (current verbal commits). One or two more could be added prior to the early signing period from Dec. 18-20.

That adds up to 91 so far, which is six over the NCAA scholarship limit of 85.

That has been the case the past several years with the number being whittled down to 85 through various forms of attrition — transfer, health, turning pro early, etc. — by the start of the following August.

— Lou Somogyi

Jonathan Jones and long snapper John Shannon. Jones is a starter on special teams, but is not on the two-deep on defense, which generally does not lend itself to a return.

Shannon has started three years, but has not been able to practice much this season. His experience would be welcomed, but it might come down to health. Notre Dame signed preferred walk-on Michael Vinson last season and has a verbal

from 2020 recruit Alex Peitsch at the position.

- Two-year starting safety and 2019 captain Alohi Gilman (5-10½, 202) is projected as a mid-round draft pick, and his "measurables" are not going to change appreciably with an extra year. He also would be in a sixth season, technically, because he attended the Naval Academy Prep School in 2015-16 before transferring to Notre Dame in 2017.

The NFL has been his dream, which is part of why he transferred from Navy. He will have his degree in December.

- Crawford, who has had two ACL tears, a torn Achilles, plus elbow ligaments torn this season, also would be in his sixth collegiate season in 2020, and this September he indicated he was not planning to apply for it. Corner is a huge need for the Irish in 2020, though.

- Running back Tony Jones Jr. has enjoyed a quality senior year, but has had a long injury history, and next season there could be six other scholarship running backs — seniors Jafar Armstrong and Avery Davis, juniors C'Bo Flemister and Jahmir Smith, sophomore Kyren Williams, and incoming freshman Chris Tyree, the nation's No. 2-ranked all-purpose back. Would Jones see less action in 2020?

- Wide receiver Javon McKinley would have an opportunity to be a starter in 2020, but he didn't make his first reception at Notre Dame until his senior season, and a sprained foot left him mostly out of commission this November. ♦



Defensive end Daelin Hayes, who suffered a season-ending shoulder injury against Virginia Sept. 28, has already declared on social media his intentions to return for a fifth season.

PHOTO BY ANDRIS VISOCKIS





# REDEMPTION VALUE

**Patience and persistence is paying off for Tony Jones Jr.**

BY TODD D. BURLAGE

**W**hether it was while playing youth league sports against kids about twice his age or following a tireless pursuit to become the best all-around athlete in South Florida, Tony Jones Jr. prepared himself well as a youngster with a willingness to try everything and fear nothing.

Not much changed for Jones during his time at Notre Dame. The senior running back has steadily moved from redshirt to one of the most valuable players on the Irish offense.

Whatever is asked — flattening tacklers, playing while injured or fighting for the extra yard — Jones

delivers, and his teammates recognize his selflessness and dedication.

“We know that when he’s running behind us he is going to give everything he’s got,” junior tight end Cole Kmet said. “He’s been a great leader in that running back room and a great warrior on the field.”

A native of St. Petersburg, Fla., and one of the top running back recruits coming out of football factory IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., Jones probably has many more reasons why he should be playing college football in the sunny south rather than snowy South Bend.

Along with his father, Tony Jones Sr., and his mother, Natalie, the Joneses initially made recruiting

visits to Florida, Florida State, Miami and Georgia.

“But mom wasn’t pleased with any of [the visits], until we came to Notre Dame,” Jones recalled. “She was impressed with the education and the people, it felt like a tight-knit family.”

So an unexpected decision was made.

“I never liked Notre Dame when I was growing up,” Jones said with a laugh. “And then, I just came here, and I just fell in love, I committed the next day.”

## SPARE NO EXPENSE

Wanting their son to become the best person, student and athlete he could be, mom and dad made plenty





Entering the regular-season finale at Stanford, Jones led the Irish in rushing with 672 yards, was averaging 5.6 yards per carry and had scored five touchdowns.

PHOTO BY ANDRIS VISOCKIS

of personal and financial sacrifices to get Jones into IMG Academy, about 40 miles south of St. Petersburg.

IMG is an elite boarding school that houses and trains top athletes from all over the country. Tuition is nearly \$70,000 a year, but Jones said the experience and coaching he received during his two and half years there was priceless. During Jones' two years at IMG, he averaged 8.9 yards per carry while rushing for 1,285 yards and scoring 25 touchdowns.

After his senior season there, Jones joined 2015 IMG teammates Shea Patterson (now Michigan's starting quarterback) and former Georgia tight end Isaac Nauta (now with the NFL's Detroit Lions) as the first IMG players to play in the prestigious U.S. Army All-American Game.

Also a baseball prodigy — many believed good enough to someday pursue a professional career — Jones played 18 games at IMG as a junior and batted .491 (26 of 53) with nine RBI, 11 stolen bases and 16 runs scored before turning his full attention to football.

And while Jones is appreciative of his athletic accomplishments at IMG, he insists that sports were only one part of his experience there. Jones explained that the structure of boarding and living independently Mondays through Fridays at IMG equipped him well for the transition to college.

"My time [at IMG] taught me how to grow up quickly and learn the process of being a player and a student," he said, "just learning how to balance all the responsibilities I will face throughout my life."

Jones was the initial Irish commit to what is becoming a steady stream of Notre Dame players from IMG.

Irish junior offensive tackle Robert Hainsey and sophomore defensive back Houston Griffith are both IMG grads, and so is safety Isaiah Pryor, who will transfer to Notre Dame from Ohio State as a graduate student this January.

Jones and Hainsey played together at IMG in 2015.

"The way Tony runs the ball is the way I think a running back *should* run the ball," Hainsey said. "He's going to run past you, through you, over you, it doesn't matter. That's what I love about him in the backfield."

## WAITING HIS TURN

Jones was rated as one of the top running back recruits in the country coming out of IMG, but he still had to pay his dues and bide his time when he arrived at Notre Dame in the summer of 2016.

The newest addition to an already deep stable of Irish running backs that included Tarean Folston, Josh Adams and Dexter Williams, Jones was relegated to scout team duties and didn't play during his freshman season.

As a sophomore in 2017, Jones rushed for 232 yards and three touch-

downs, but was overshadowed by Adams who rushed for more than 1,400 yards and even garnered some brief Heisman chatter.

With Adams off to the NFL, Jones hoped that his junior season in 2018 would be his time to shine.

But similarly to 2017, senior running back Dexter Williams emerged in 2018, played in front of Jones and finished that season with 995 rushing yards, despite missing four games.

Jones still managed 392 rushing yards on 83 carries in 2018, but he wanted more, especially as a senior in 2019.

"I know my potential," he said. "But I also knew

that the guys in front of me were really good, they were great leaders and they were great players.

"I just always had to be ready when my number was called, and I think I have been."

Jones' patience finally brought some payoff this year.

During a mid-season stretch against Virginia, Bowling Green and USC, Jones recorded three straight 100-yard games — including his career-high 176 yards against the Trojans. Jones has led the Irish in rushing all season, and had 672 yards entering the regular-season finale at Stanford.

"Gimme a boatload of Tony Joneses," head coach Brian Kelly said, "and I'll take them in a heartbeat."

With the 2019 regular season complete and only a bowl game remaining, Jones faces a decision on whether to return to Notre Dame for a fifth season.

"I haven't thought about any of that stuff, really," said Jones, when asked about his plans for 2020. "I'm just trying to finish this season out strong with my teammates and I'll make my decision sooner or later."

In the meantime, Jones is going to savor every last moment of this season, in case it's his last.

"This is a dream come true. Being the starting running back at such a prestigious school, it's showing that my hard work is paying off," Jones said. "There have been a lot of ups and downs, but Notre Dame has helped me grow as a man and as a player." ♦

**"I know my potential. But I also knew that the guys in front of me were really good, they were great leaders and they were great players. I just always had to be ready when my number was called, and I think I have been."**

JONES





Junior right tackle and team captain Robert Hainsey, a four-star recruit who was ranked No. 108 overall nationally by Rivals, suffered a season-ending fractured ankle against Virginia Tech Nov. 2.

PHOTO BY ANDRIS VISOCKIS

# NEXT MAN IN

**Notre Dame has successfully dealt with a number of injuries this season**

**T**he injury bug has bit Notre Dame particularly hard this season, leaving marks, bumps and bruises all over the team.

The entire right side of the offensive line went down for the season in consecutive weeks against Michigan and Virginia Tech, while two of the team's most productive defensive ends are also out for the year. Several other rotational players have missed time due to nagging ailments or more significant injuries.

What's even more alarming is that many of these players were top recruits and major contributors.

Of the 10 players who were sidelined against Boston College, seven of them were ranked among the top 110 players nationally by Rivals coming out of high school. Two of the others were sophomore linebacker Shayne Simon and sophomore defensive tackle Jayson Ademilola, who were both ranked inside the top 100 by ESPN. The third was senior Julian Okwara, a projected first- or second-round pick in the 2020 NFL Draft. All 10 were consensus four-star recruits.

In past seasons, having this much talent on the sidelines would have been crippling. However, heading into the regular-season finale at Stanford, Notre Dame was playing its best football of the season and had three straight wins by 20 points or more for the first time in decades.

"We've built better depth from one through 85 in our scholarships," head coach Brian Kelly said. "We started to look at from 50 down to 85 and how important those numbers were in terms of developing those players so they could step in and keep this thing at a high level."

The depth has been built through recruiting and player development. For instance, junior Josh Lugg who replaced junior Robert Hainsey at right tackle was rated as the No. 22 offensive tackle and No. 226 prospect in the class of 2017 by Rivals, and was a consensus four-star recruit.

At 6-7 and 307 pounds, he was able to slide into the starting position without a significant drop-off.

"Lugg is a highly recruited player," Kelly said. "His opportunity is now, and we expect him to compete at a high level for us."

But the hole at right guard, left by a season-ending knee injury to former



Rivals top-50 player Tommy Kraemer at Michigan Oct. 26, needed to be filled by an unheralded fifth-year senior with a history of injuries in Trevor Ruhland. He's made his mistakes, but he also understands his limitations and plays within himself.

There's a similar situation at the drop end position, where Okwara and senior Daelin Hayes are both out. They've been replaced by senior Jamir Jones, a former linebacker and high school quarterback, and sophomore Ovie Oghoufo, who enrolled at Notre Dame as a linebacker. Both have been productive players and have combined for 4.5 sacks since their roles expanded.

If you ask the players why these former reserve players have been so successful, they'll often cite the "next-man-in" cliché.

"You always have to stay ready and be ready to make the most of your opportunities when they're given, and that's what I try to do each and every day," Jones said.

Kelly acknowledges that it takes more than a certain player mentality

to properly develop inexperienced players.

"It's not just about next man in," Kelly said. "It's about building a championship defense. And you just don't do that in August. You're building rela-

### "I think we've built better depth from one through 85 in our scholarships."

HEAD COACH BRIAN KELLY

tionships and trust and accountability, and you're doing that after this season's over, and you're doing it when you get back in the weight room in January. This is a year-round process. It takes an army to build it — an army in the sense of not one person.

"A lot of people have to put in a lot of time: the support staff, strength and conditioning and nutrition. There are a lot of people that have hands in helping build a championship program. And I'm very lucky to have a great staff."

In their own way, injuries also help build depth for the future. Oghoufo

was not going to play this season if it weren't for multiple injuries at defensive end, but it was always expected that he'd play next year when Okwara and senior Khalid Kareem move on to the NFL.

Now when 2020 rolls around, Og-

houfo will be a seasoned player, as opposed to someone who has never taken a meaningful snap.

Another piece that isn't discussed as much is the emotional aspect of replacing one of your teammates, who is out for the season or maybe even the rest of his collegiate career. The new starter may relish the opportunity while also feeling sadness or remorse for his teammate.

"I was talking with Tommy [Kraemer] about this the other day," Ruhland said. "He said, 'Your parents probably had weird emotions during the Michigan game.' I was like, 'Imagine what I was going through.' I would trade playing right now for Tommy and Rob to be healthy."

"They're our best players. It's heartbreaking seeing them on crutches on the sidelines."

If Notre Dame wants to take the next step and seriously vie for a national championship — or return to the College Football Playoff in the near future — developing quality depth as it has this season will be essential.

This was shown in the Cotton Bowl against Clemson last season when All-American corner Julian Love went out of the game for a brief period of time in the second quarter. The Tigers quickly exploited his absence with three touchdowns, and the Fighting Irish never recovered.

Championship-level teams need depth at every position, and Notre Dame is finally showing that this is achievable. ♦

### HIGHLY RECRUITED NOTRE DAME PLAYERS SIDELINED BY INJURY VERSUS BOSTON COLLEGE

Name	Position	Class	Rivals National Ranking
Daelin Hayes	DE	2016	31
Tommy Kraemer	OG	2016	41
Javon McKinley	WR	2016	59
Quinn Carroll	OT	2019	68
Jack Lamb	LB	2018	77
Kevin Austin*	WR	2018	88
Robert Hainsey	OT	2017	108
Shayne Simon	LB	2018	168
Jayson Ademilola	DT	2018	169
Julian Okwara	DE	2016	Unranked^

\* Player out due to suspension; ^ rated as a four-star recruit



Senior right guard Tommy Kraemer, a former top-50 prospect according to Rivals, suffered a knee injury at Michigan Oct. 26 that sidelined him for the remainder of the 2019 campaign.

PHOTO BY LON HORWEDL





# SPECIAL DAY

**Kicking game propels Notre Dame to a 45-24 win at Stanford and its third straight 10-win season**

BY LOU SOMOGYI

**A** 5-0 finish in November, ending a five-game losing streak in Stanford Stadium and a third straight 10-win campaign to improve to 32-6 the past three years were gratifying results during Notre Dame's 45-24 victory at Stanford.

An extra "special" touch in the

contest was especially uplifting.

The Fighting Irish (10-2) rallied from a 17-7 deficit versus the Cardinal (4-8) late in the first half on the strength of a blocked punt by freshman defensive end Isaiah Foskey that dramatically altered the game's momentum and resulted in a 31-0 run thereafter for a 38-17 cushion. Another Notre Dame score was set up when senior long snapper John

Shannon recovered a fumbled punt.

"The thing that stands out is special teams today," head coach Brian Kelly said. "We needed a big day from our special teams unit, and we got it. It started with the punt block and from there we got some momentum and started to settle down a little bit offensively.

"[I've] been coaching a long time. I don't remember special teams really impacting a game so significantly in the way it did today."

Senior quarterback Ian Book completed 17 of 30 passes for 255 yards with four touchdowns and no interceptions, with senior wide receiver Chase Claypool snatching two of the scores. Meanwhile, after falling behind 17-7, Notre Dame's defense forced seven consecutive Stanford punts, four of them three-and-outs,





Freshman defensive end Isaiah Foskey, a Californian, made the turning point of the game with his tremendous punt block in the second quarter when the Irish were trailing 17-7.

PHOTO BY SPENCER ALLEN

highlighted by all three Cardinal series in the third quarter.

### FIRST QUARTER: STANFORD, 10-7

**Top Moment:** With the score tied 7-7, Stanford drove to a first down at Notre Dame's 2-yard line. Three running plays netted only one yard, and on fourth down the Cardinal had a false start, forcing a 24-yard field goal by Ryan Sanborn. Even though Stanford used 8:15 off the clock on that 16-play, 82-yard drive, it felt like a victory for the Irish to allow only three points.

**Feature Performer:** Junior quarterback Davis Mills completed 8 of 10 passes for 100 yards with a touchdown, and added a 13-yard scam-

ble on third-and-seven to keep Stanford's touchdown drive alive during the opening series.

**Stats:** The Cardinal had the ball 11:55 to Notre Dame's 3:05. Stanford totaled 158 total yards, while Notre Dame's two possessions resulted in 76 yards.

**Notes:** Stanford received the opening kickoff and marched 75 yards in seven plays, with Mills connecting on a five-yard jump-ball to 6-4 receiver Brycen Tremayne over senior cornerback Troy Pride Jr. for the touchdown at the 11:26 mark ... Mills was 5 of 5 for 72 yards on the drive, completing passes to four different targets ... After Stanford jumped to a 7-0 lead following the opening kick-

off, Notre Dame answered with an 80-yard march in five plays in which Book completed 4 of 5 passes for 65 yards, the last a screen to senior running back Tony Jones Jr. for a 16-yard score, one play after finding Jones for 24 yards on a wheel route.

### SECOND QUARTER: NOTRE DAME, 21-17

**Top Moment:** Leading 17-7, Stanford was set to punt on fourth-and-one from deep in its territory when Foskey broke through and blocked the punt that sophomore defensive end Justin Ademilola recovered and returned to the Stanford 1-yard line. On third-and-goal from the 6-yard line (after an Irish false start penalty), Book found sophomore tight end Tommy Tremble across the middle for a touchdown with 3:01 remaining in the half.

After forcing a Stanford punt the next series, it took only three pass completions — 21 yards to junior tight end Cole Kmet, and then 14 and 41 yards to Claypool, the latter for a touchdown when he high-pointed the ball in the end zone — for a 21-17 lead at the 1:20 mark.

**Feature Performer:** Book completed 5 of 9 passes for 100 yards with the two touchdowns.

**Stats:** Stanford had the ball 19:40 in the first half to Notre Dame's 10:20 and outgained the Irish in total yardage 278-194. But the punt block by Foskey was a game changer.

**Notes:** With Notre Dame trailing 10-7, Stanford took possession at the Irish 46-yard line after a 37-yard punt and reached the end zone five plays later to build its advantage to 17-7 ... Mills broke free from a would-be sack by junior nose tackle Kurt Hinish and scrambled for 17 yards ... On third-and-eight from the Irish 27, Mills lofted a fade toward wide-out Michael Wilson, who positioned himself well and made a leaping grab over sophomore cornerback TaRiq Bracy for the touchdown with 9:29 remaining until halftime.

### THIRD QUARTER: NOTRE DAME, 28-17

**Top Moment:** An eight-yard touchdown pass to Claypool on a crossing route was the lone score of the quarter with 3:10 left. The Irish actually faced a first-and-17 from their 7-yard line when a 43-yard pass from Book to sophomore wide receiver Braden



Senior quarterback Ian Book had a good homecoming game in California, completing 17 of 30 passes for 255 yards with four touchdowns and no interceptions.

PHOTO BY SPENCER ALLEN

## NOTRE DAME 45, STANFORD 24

Nov. 30, 2019 ♦ Attendance: 37,391  
Stanford Stadium ♦ Stanford, Calif.

Quarter	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Notre Dame	7	14	7	17	45
Stanford	10	7	0	7	24

ND STAN

### FIRST QUARTER

STAN Tremayne 5-yard pass from Mills  
(Sanborn kick) 11:26

Drive: 7 plays, 75 yards, 3:34

ND T. Jones 16-yard pass from Book  
(Doerer kick) 9:54

Drive: 5 plays, 80 yards, 1:27

STAN Sanborn 24-yard field goal  
1:35

Drive: 16 plays, 82 yards, 8:15

### SECOND QUARTER

STAN Wilson 27-yard pass from Mills  
(Sanborn kick) 9:29

Drive: 5 plays, 46 yards, 1:42

ND Tremble 6-yard pass from Book  
(Doerer kick) 3:01

Drive: 3 plays, 1 yard, 1:44

ND Claypool 41-yard pass from Book  
(Doerer kick) 1:20

Drive: 3 plays, 76 yards, 0:21

### THIRD QUARTER

ND Claypool 8-yard pass from Book  
(Doerer kick) 3:10

Drive: 8 plays, 86 yards, 3:59

### FOURTH QUARTER

ND Doerer 42-yard field goal  
13:36

Drive: 6 plays, 24 yards, 1:34

ND Flemister 1-yard run  
(Doerer kick) 5:10

Drive: 10 plays, 72 yards, 5:55

STAN Scarlett 9-yard run  
(Sanborn kick) 1:54

Drive: 7 plays, 62 yards, 3:12

ND Kareem fumble recovery in  
end zone (Doerer kick) 0:41

	ND	STAN
<b>Total First Downs</b>	24	26
Rushing	12	9
Passing	9	15
Penalty	3	2
<b>Rushing Attempts</b>	37	28
<b>Yards Gained Rushing</b>	209	126
<b>Yards Lost Rushing</b>	19	8
<b>Net Yards Rushing</b>	190	118
<b>Net Yards Passing</b>	255	276
Passes Attempted	30	47
Passes Completed	17	28
Had Intercepted	0	0
Percent Completion	56.7%	59.6%
Yards Per Attempt	8.5	5.9
Yards Per Completion	15.0	9.9
<b>Total Offensive Plays</b>	67	75
<b>Total Net Yards</b>	445	394
Average Gain Per Play	6.6	5.3
<b>Fumbles: No.-Lost</b>	0-0	2-2
<b>Penalties: No.-Yards</b>	11-95	6-56
<b>Punts: No.-Yards</b>	6-223	8-283
Average Per Punt	37.2	35.4
Average Net Punt	37.3	32.5
<b>Punt Returns: No.-Yards</b>	1-23	1--1
<b>Kickoff Returns: No.-Yards</b>	4-78	6-108
<b>Interception Returns: No.-Yards</b>	0-0	0-0
<b>Fumble Returns: No.-Yards</b>	0-0	0-0
<b>Miscellaneous Yards</b>	0	0
<b>Possession Time</b>	29:57	30:03
<b>Third-Down Conversions</b>	4-14	4-14
Percentage	28.6%	28.6%
<b>Fourth-Down Conversions</b>	2-2	1-1
Percentage	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Sacks By: No.-Yards</b>	2-8	1-5

Lenzy put it at midfield. On fourth-and-three from Stanford's 29, Book rolled out and found an opening for a 26-yard scramble to the 3-yard line.

**Feature Performer:** Notre Dame's defense, led by junior rover Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah, forced three-and-outs on all three Stanford possessions that totaled 22 yards in nine plays.

**Stats:** The Irish outgained the Cardinal 158-22 in the third quarter to take a 352-300 lead in total yardage. Notre Dame had 251 passing yards and 101 rushing yards.

**Notes:** Notre Dame received the second half kickoff and drove 51 yards before having to settle for a 43-yard field goal attempt by junior Jonathan Doerer that sailed wide right at the 10:46 mark ... With 10 seconds left, Stanford's Michael Wilson fumbled a punt that senior long snapper John Shannon recovered at the Stanford 48-yard line.

## FOURTH QUARTER: NOTRE DAME, 45-24

**Top Moment:** With 41 seconds remaining, Irish senior defensive end Khalid Kareem recovered a fumble in the end zone forced by fellow senior end Ade Ogundeki on Mills. Ogundeki had scored a touchdown earlier in the season versus Virginia on a strip-sack forced by a third senior defensive end, Julian Okwara.

**Feature Performer:** Limited to 101 rushing yards the first three quarters, Notre Dame totaled 89 on the ground in the final 15 minutes, highlighted by a 28-yard scamper by junior Jafar Armstrong and a 24-yard dash by Lenzy versus a tiring Cardinal defense. Those two plays set up sophomore running back C'Bo Flemister's one-yard touchdown run with 5:10 left that upped the score to 38-17.

**Stats:** The Irish ended up with a 445-394 advantage in total yards, finishing with 255 passing and 190 rushing. After Stanford dominated the first half time of possession 19:40 to 10:20, it was almost the exact opposite in the second half for the Irish: 19:37 to 10:23.

**Notes:** With 13:36 remaining, Doerer converted a 42-yard field goal to increase Notre Dame's advantage to 31-17 that was set up by Shannon's fumble recovery at the close of the third quarter ... Stanford broke its scoring drought to pull within 38-24 with 1:54 remaining on a nine-yard touchdown run by Cameron Scarlett to conclude a 62-yard drive. ♦



## STANFORD RUNNING GAME VS. NOTRE DAME RUN DEFENSE

Considering the Cardinal entered the contest ranked 123rd among 130 Football Bowl Subdivision teams in rushing with a 104.4 average, plus started three true freshmen along the offensive line, it did well to finish with 118 yards on the ground, although workhorse Cameron Scarlett's 13 carries netted only 43 yards (3.3 average per attempt).

With defensive tackles Myron Tagovailoa-Amosa and Jayson Ademilola both sidelined with injuries, end Ade Ogundeji slid inside. Stanford tested the interior earlier and tasted some success because of the early production with the pass, but it was not sustainable against a still far more veteran overall defense.

**ADVANTAGE:** Notre Dame

## STANFORD PASSING GAME VS. NOTRE DAME PASS DEFENSE

A five-star recruit in 2017, quarterback Davis Mills displayed poise and accuracy during the first three drives in which he was 12 of 17 for 144 yards with two touchdowns, plus producing a field goal on the third drive. Notre Dame eventually countered with dropping eight men into coverage, yet was still able to apply decent pressure on Mills off the edge to force some errant throws.

Over the final 39:31, he was only 16 of 29 for 132 yards, resulting in seven consecutive punts, four of them on three-and-out series.

**ADVANTAGE:** Notre Dame

## NOTRE DAME RUNNING GAME VS. STANFORD RUN DEFENSE

The ground attack was an auxiliary element the first three quarters because the primary emphasis was on shredding a Stanford defense that ranked 109th in pass efficiency and 118th in passing yards allowed — and was without its top corner (Paulson Adebo) and one of its top safeties (Malik Antoine). Through three quarters, Notre Dame rushed for only 101 yards, highlighted by a 26-yard ad-lib scramble by senior quarterback Ian Book, and seldom did the Irish get much of a push along the line of scrimmage.

In the fourth quarter, with the game in hand, the Irish began to wear down a tiring Cardinal defense and rushed for 89 yards in those 15 minutes, highlighted by a tackle-breaking 28-yard run by junior Jafar Armstrong and a 24-yard jet sweep by explosive sophomore wide receiver Braden Lenzy. It was not a dominant effort on Notre Dame's part, but the 190-yard result still surpassed its 175-yard average.

**ADVANTAGE:** Notre Dame

## NOTRE DAME PASSING GAME VS. STANFORD PASS DEFENSE

Like Davis for Stanford, Book spread the wealth early, yet didn't connect with senior wide receiver Chase Claypool until the final two minutes of the first half, with the second a 41-yard back-shoulder touchdown in which Claypool, per usual, high-pointed the ball with excellent timing to put the Irish ahead for good.

As excellent an execution on any pass this year was Book's 43-yard strike to Lenzy when the Irish led only 21-17 and were backed up with a first-and-17 situation at their 7-yard line. With good protection, Book patiently waited for Lenzy to cut clear across the field and hit him perfectly in stride. That drive ended with what has been a recent staple — Claypool cutting across the middle in the red zone for an eight-yard score.

A 16-yard, check-down screen to senior running back Tony Jones Jr. also was well executed for a score, and Book again demonstrated fine patience on a third-and-goal, six-yard scoring pass to sophomore tight end Tommy Tremble. The Stanford front did bat down four of Book's passes, but he finished 17 of 30 for 255 yards with four scores and no interceptions.

**ADVANTAGE:** Notre Dame

## SPECIAL TEAMS

Perhaps not since Robert Blanton's punt block and touchdown in 2010 for 4-5 Notre Dame while trailing No. 15 Utah 3-0, thus propelling a 28-3 win, has a special teams play other than a field goal had a greater impact in a victory than freshman defensive end Isaiah Foskey's blocked punt early in the second quarter.

Trailing 17-7, Foskey's rangy 6-5 frame timed the block perfectly, setting up the Irish at the Stanford 1-yard line. It began a 31-0 run by Notre Dame



**Notre Dame consistently pressured Cardinal quarterback Davis Mills and limited him to 16-of-29 passing for 132 yards over the final 39 minutes of the game.**

PHOTO BY CHUCK ARAGON

— which also was aided by a fumble recovery by senior long snapper John Shannon on a muffed Cardinal punt. Add in a 42-yard Jonathan Doerflinger field goal plus solid Irish coverage on kicks and punts, and it was an exceptional day at the office for the kicking game.

**ADVANTAGE:** Notre Dame

## THIRD-DOWN CONVERSIONS

Both teams were 4 of 14 (28.6 percent), but the difference is Stanford began 4 of 6, highlighted by the 27-yard touchdown pass from Mills to Michael Wilson on third-and-eight that gave the Cardinal a 17-7 advantage with 9:39 left in the first half. Thereafter, it was 0 of 8.

Meanwhile, after falling behind 17-7, the Irish tallied on third-and-goal from the 6-yard line with a pass to Tremble. Notre Dame also converted two crucial fourth-and-two situations on two different touchdown drives, the former on a 26-yard scramble by Book to Stanford's 3-yard line.

**ADVANTAGE:** Even

## TURNOVERS

The Irish entered the contest third nationally in turnover margin and third in turnovers forced — and it came out on top 2-0, resulting in 10 points, the latter directly with 41 seconds left in the game when senior end Khalid Kareem recovered a Mills fumble in the end zone forced by Ogundeji.

**ADVANTAGE:** Notre Dame

## ANALYSIS

To Stanford's credit, it came out sharp and played with pride amidst a 4-8 season in which it lost its last four.

To Notre Dame's credit, it remained patient, with first special teams and then the defense and ultimately the offense complementing each other during a game-deciding 31-0 run over a span of 27:51 from late in the second quarter to late in the fourth.



Sophomore wide receiver Braden Lenzy had perhaps his most complete game, gaining 96 yards on six offensive touches balanced evenly with 48 receiving (two catches) and 48 rushing (four carries).

PHOTO BY SPENCER ALLEN

## OFFENSE: WR BRADEN LENZY

This award could go to senior quarterback Ian Book after most wins — but this week we decided to look at the speedy sophomore wide receiver, who had a huge impact on the game.

Lenzy reportedly ran a 4.4-second 40-yard dash at a combine Notre Dame hosted in the spring, but he was banged up early in the year and people were unable to see that production on the field. That changed in the second half of the season, and Lenzy put together one of his best games at Stanford.

He finished the contest with a total of six offensive touches for 96 yards, split evenly between yards on the ground and through the air.

Lenzy's 43-yard reception on first-and-17 in the third quarter helped to break open the game.

## DEFENSE: ROVER JEREMIAH OWUSU-KORAMOAH

The junior rover has established himself as one of the most athletic defensive players Notre Dame has had in years, and he showed why against Stanford.

In the third quarter, Owusu-Koramoah had a superb pass broken up on Stanford quarterback Davis Mills, when he blitzed into the backfield and almost picked off a ball being thrown to the flat.

He also led Notre Dame in tackles with nine and solo stops with six.

## SPECIAL TEAMS: DE ISAIAH FOSKEY

Coming into the matchup against Stanford, the true freshman defensive end had already appeared in three contests and had one game left to play without burning his redshirt. Notre Dame head coach Brian Kelly decided to use his last game against Stanford — and it paid off immensely.

In the second quarter with Notre Dame down 17-7, Foskey blocked a punt that was recovered by the Irish and returned to the Stanford 1-yard line. This completely changed the momentum of the game. By the end of the first half, the Irish were up 21-17 and never looked back.

## THREE OBSERVATIONS

BY LOU SOMOGYI

### TURNING POINT

Leading 17-7, Stanford came up inches short on third-and-three from its 22-yard line when senior cornerback Troy Pride Jr. closed strong on scrambling quarterback Davis Mills, thus forcing a punt. Notre Dame freshmen defensive end Isaiah Foskey then broke through to block the kick that was recovered at the 1-yard line by sophomore defensive end Justin Ademilola.

That resulted in a six-yard touchdown pass (after an Irish false start) on third-and-goal from senior quarterback Ian Book to sophomore tight end Tommy Tremble with 3:01 left until halftime. This game-altering sequence ignited a 31-0 run by Notre Dame.

After the Irish defense quickly forced another punt, Book completed three straight passes, the last a 41-yard deep ball to a leaping Claypool in the end zone with 1:20 left.

In a span of 1:41, the Fighting Irish went from a 17-7 deficit to a 21-17 advantage.

### STAT(S) OF THE GAME

Two data points particularly stand out.

While building its 17-7 advantage, Stanford quarterback Davis Mills completed 12 of 17 passes for 144 yards with two touchdowns, finding multiple different targets while deftly picking apart Notre Dame's coverages.

Thereafter, which encompassed the final 39 minutes and 31 seconds of the game, Mills was only 16 of 29 for 132 yards, or a mere 8.3 yards per completion and a measly 4.6 yards per attempt. It resulted in Stanford punting the ball on seven consecutive possessions, four of them three-and-outs, before scoring a touchdown in the final two minutes.

Second, Stanford nearly doubled Notre Dame's time of possession in the first half: 19:40 to 10:20, while staying competitive. Then in the second half, the Irish were only three seconds short of replicating that same time of possession advantage — 19:37 to 10:23 — while outscoring the Cardinal 28-7.

### BOWLED OVER

Twenty-five years ago, an unranked and 6-4-1 Notre Dame team was invited to play No. 4-ranked and 10-1 Colorado in the Fiesta Bowl. As anticipated, the Irish were dispatched of fairly easily, 41-24 (41-10 at one point) in the mismatch.

A quarter-century later, a strong 10-2 Notre Dame team likely will be on the outside looking in at the major bowl scene, with a date versus a third-place Big 12 team in the Camping World Bowl Dec. 28 in Orlando, Fla., the most likely destination. That's just one aspect of so many areas that have changed in the college football landscape for the Fighting Irish.

Despite a 5-0 November in which Notre Dame won each game by at least 21 points, a quality regular season was overshadowed by two factors: no attention-grabbing win over a top foe (pretty much not since Florida State in 1993) and the 45-14 no-show fiasco at Ann Arbor Oct. 26.



## BY THE NUMBERS

BY LOU SOMOGYI

**2** Years in a row Notre Dame won its regular-season finale in California — a first since Stanford was permanently added to the schedule on an annual basis in 1997. Notre Dame ended last year's regular season with a 24-17 conquest of USC.

The last time the Fighting Irish had back-to-back seasons in which they finished with a win in the final regular-season contest was 2000 at 5-7 USC (38-21) and then at Purdue (24-18) in 2001, a game that was moved to Dec. 1 because of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the country.

**3** Seasons in succession Notre Dame achieved at least 10 victories: 10-3 in 2017, 12-1 in 2018 and 10-2 so far this year. The only other time that occurred was 1991 (10-3), 1992 (10-1-1) and 1993 (11-1). Keeping it in context, Notre Dame generally played 10 or fewer regular-season games until 1974 and didn't begin permanent 12-game regular-season schedules until 2006.

**9** Straight wins in the month of November by Notre Dame. The Fighting Irish finished 4-0 last November and 5-0 this season, with its last

such defeat coming at Stanford in the 2017 regular-season finale (38-20). This is the program's longest November/December regular-season winning streak since achieving 10 in a row from 1953-55.

**26** Turnovers forced by the Notre Dame — the most in head coach Brian Kelly's 10 seasons — after generating two more versus the Cardinal in the second half to set up scores. The previous standard had been 25 in his first season (2010). Notre Dame entered the game third in the country in turnovers forced, and it now tied with Alabama for fourth, behind only Florida Atlantic (29), Baylor (28) and Illinois (28).

**33** Touchdown passes tossed by senior quarterback Ian Book this season after adding four more versus the Cardinal (compared to only six interceptions in 12 games). The touchdown total is the second most in one season, eclipsed only by the 37 tossed by senior Brady Quinn during the 10-3 season in 2006. Quinn also held the No. 2 spot with 32 during the 9-3 campaign his junior year in 2005, until Book surpassed it.

They are the only two Notre Dame quarterbacks to reach 30 in one season, with Everett Golson coming close in 2014 with 29.

**45** Points scored by Notre Dame, the third most in the 34-game history of the series, behind only the 57-7 win in 2003 and the 48-20 victory in 1993, both also at Stanford.

**516** Rushing yards this season by Book after garnering 29 more at Stanford on eight carries. He joins Tony Rice (1988 and 1989), Carlyle Holiday (2001), DeShone Kizer (2015) and Brandon Wimbush (2017) as the fifth Notre Dame quarterback to pass the 500-yard rushing milestone in a season, and is the only one with Kizer to amass more than 2,000 yards (and even 2,500) passing and 500 rushing in the same season.

**1930** Marks the most recent season until now that Notre Dame posted a 5-0 mark exclusively in the month of November. That was head coach Knute Rockne's final year, which resulted in a second straight national title.



**143** Career receptions by senior wideout **CHASE CLAYPOOL**, after catching three for 63 yards and two touchdowns in the win at Stanford. That moved him past former 2009-12 tight end and first-round draft pick Tyler Eifert for eighth place on the all-time Notre Dame receptions list. He is now one catch behind tying another first-round pick, Will Fuller (2013-15), on the all-time chart, although Fuller played only three seasons.

PHOTO BY SPENCER ALLEN



## FIGHTING IRISH SHUT DOWN THE CARDINAL IN SECOND HALF

Throughout most of the season, Notre Dame defensive coordinator Clark Lea has been praised for his in-game adjustments. The Stanford game was no exception.

Cardinal junior quarterback Davis Mills got off to a hot start against Notre Dame, connecting on 5 of 5 throws for 71 yards with a touchdown on the opening drive of the game. By the end of the first half, he was 19-of-29 passing for 196 yards with two touchdowns, and the Cardinal trailed the Irish by just four points (21-17).

During the first 20-plus minutes of the second half, however, the Irish defense shut down Mills. He completed just 5 of 12 passes for 31 yards while Notre Dame built a 38-17 lead.

"Defensively, I think what happened for us more than anything else, they were to do some spot passing game, and we had to make some adjustments at halftime, which we did and kept the ball in front of us," Notre Dame head coach Brian Kelly said. "We went into some more drop eight, and I think that was pretty effective for us in the second half."

At the same time, the Fighting Irish were able to get more pressure on Mills, especially from seniors Ade Ogundeji and Jamir Jones, who com-



Junior rover Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah posted a team-high nine tackles and also broke up a pass as the Irish defense held Stanford scoreless for a 37:35 stretch from the second quarter until late in the fourth quarter.

PHOTO BY SPENCER ALLEN

### MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

- Senior Ian Book became the first Notre Dame quarterback with 2,500 passing yards, 500 rushing yards and 30 touchdown passes in a season. Oklahoma's Jalen Hurts is the only other signal-caller in the country to hit those marks in 2019. Since 2017, only Book, Hurts, Kyler Murray of Oklahoma, JT Barrett of Ohio State and D'Eriq King of Houston have hit those marks in the regular season.

- Senior safety Jalen Elliott and fifth-year senior linebacker Asmar Bilal each played in their 50th career game. They become just the fifth and sixth players in Notre Dame history to play in 50 or more games during their careers. The others are Manti Te'o, Harrison Smith and Drue Tranquill with 51, and Tyler Newsome with 50.

- Tommy Tremble's second-quarter touchdown catch was the sophomore's fourth receiving score of the season. For the first time in school history, two tight ends have had four touchdown receptions or more in the same season — junior Cole Kmet with six and Tremble with four.

bined for two sacks, a quarterback hit and a forced fumble in the second half.

Junior rover Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah also wreaked havoc behind the line of scrimmage en route to a team-best nine tackles, and almost picked off a pass in the backfield.

In the second half, the Notre Dame defense also clamped down on the Stanford rushing attack, allowing just 36 yards.

Mills ended up throwing for an additional 49 yards in garbage time at the end of the fourth quarter, but it's safe to say this is a defensive performance from the Fighting Irish that the former Rivals five-star quarterback won't soon forget.

### BIG PLAYS ON SPECIAL TEAMS A FACTOR

The game did not start the way Notre Dame drew it up while preparing for the Cardinal. Outside of the first drive for Notre Dame, the offense struggled for the better part of a quarter and a half until true freshman defensive end Isaiah Fos-

key bullied his way into Stanford's backfield and blocked a punt.

That play set up the Irish offense on the Stanford 1-yard line, which three plays later turned into a touchdown to pull Notre Dame to within three.

Senior long snapper John Shannon then got into the action with the recovery of a muffed punt, setting up a field goal by junior kicker Jonathan Doerer that pushed the lead to 31-17 early in the fourth quarter.

Another Shannon sighting came late in the fourth when he deflected a punt back into the field of play from the end zone, which was downed on the Stanford 4-yard line. The next play, senior defensive end Ade Ogundeji came around the edge with a strip-sack in the end zone that was recovered by senior end Khalid Kareem for a touchdown and the final tally of the game.

If not for the momentum swing of the punt block in the second quarter, the game may not have ended in favor of the Irish. Notre Dame was down 17-7 at the time and nothing was going right for the offense. The



block not only set up the score for the Irish, but it firmly put the momentum on the side of Notre Dame for the remainder of the contest.

## RECEIVING CORPS FILLS THE VOID CREATED BY FINKE'S ABSENCE

Most fans and members of the college football media were surprised when Notre Dame fifth-year senior

wide receiver Chris Finke ran onto the field to only return punts against Stanford. He did not play a single offensive snap, nor did he have a single punt return yard.

"He pulled a hamstring on Tuesday, and he just wasn't 100 percent," Notre Dame head coach Brian Kelly said. "We felt like he could handle

the football for us back there as a punt returner, but with Keys and Avery at 100 percent, it just didn't make any sense to put Chris in there."

But in Finke's absence, it was senior wide receiver Chase Claypool, sophomore speedster Braden Lenzy and junior tight end Cole Kmet who picked up the pace with some big plays.

### NOTRE DAME INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing	Att.	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
T. Jones	14	52	2	50	3.6	0	11
Lenzy	4	48	0	48	12.0	0	24
Armstrong	3	44	0	44	14.7	0	28
Book	8	40	11	29	3.6	0	26
Flemister	5	21	0	21	4.2	1	12
Smith	3	4	6	-2	-0.7	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>

Passing	Att.	Com.	Pct.	Int.	Yards	TD	Long
Book	30	17	56.7	0	255	4	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>56.7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>43</b>

Receiving	Rec.	Yards	TD	Long
Kmet	5	77	0	21
Claypool	3	63	2	41
Lenzy	2	48	0	43
T. Jones	2	40	1	24
Tremble	2	16	1	10
Armstrong	2	3	0	4
Keys	1	8	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>43</b>

Punt Returns	No.	Yards	TD	Long
Foskey	1	23	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Kick Returns	No.	Yards	TD	Long
Keys	4	78	0	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>

Punting	No.	Avg.	Long	Blk.	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Bramblett	6	37.2	45	0	0	3	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

Field Goals	Made	Att.	Long	Blk.
Doerer	1	2	42	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>

Defense	Solo	Asst.	Total	TFL	Sacks	PD	FF	FR
Owusu-Koramoah	6	3	9	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Ogundeji	3	3	6	1.5-6	1.5-6	0	1	0
Kareem	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	1
Hamilton	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Ja. Jones	1	3	4	0.5-2	0.5-2	0	0	0
Pride	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
White	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bilal	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bracy	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Elliott	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Ju. Ademilola	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Gilman	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Crawford	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Claypool	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Foskey	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Lacey	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bauer	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Flemister	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Genmark Heath	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Vaughn	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Shannon	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	1

Int. Returns	No.	Yards	TD	Long
None				

### STANFORD INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing	Att.	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Scarlett	13	43	0	43	3.3	1	16
Mills	7	44	8	36	5.1	0	17
A. Jones	7	33	0	33	4.7	0	10
Peat	1	6	0	6	6.0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>

Passing	Att.	Com.	Pct.	Int.	Yards	TD	Long
Mills	46	28	60.9	0	276	2	27
TEAM	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>

Receiving	Rec.	Yards	TD	Long
Wilson	10	96	1	27
Fehoko	6	63	0	13
Parkinson	3	37	0	20
Scarlett	3	25	0	13
St. Brown	3	14	0	6
Jones	1	24	0	24
Harrington	1	12	0	12
Tremayne	1	5	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>

Punt Returns	No.	Yards	TD	Long
Wilson	1	-1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Kick Returns	No.	Yards	TD	Long
Jones	4	60	0	22
Peat	2	48	0	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>

Punting	No.	Avg.	Long	Blk.	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Sanborn	7	40.4	60	1	0	1	1	3
TEAM	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

Field Goals	Made	Att.	Long	Blk.
Sanborn	1	1	24	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>

Defense	Solo	Asst.	Total	TFL	Sacks	PD	FF	FR
Head	7	1	8	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Robinson	4	3	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Williamson	3	4	7	1-1	0-0	0	0	0
Reid	5	1	6	2.5-11	0-0	0	0	0
Pryts	1	4	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Booker	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	2	0	0
Eboh	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Swann	2	1	3	1-5	1-5	1	0	0
Toohill	1	2	3	1-1	0-0	1	0	0
Kelly	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
N. Williams	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Parson	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Damuni	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Kaufusi	1	0	1	1-1	0-0	0	0	0
McGill	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wade-Perry	1	0	1	1-1	0-0	0	0	0
B. Jones	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Phillips	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Tremayne	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
M. Williams	0	1	1	0.5-0	0-0	0	0	0

Int. Returns	No.	Yards	TD	Long
None				

### PARTICIPATION CHART

#### OFFENSE

**QB:** IAN BOOK

**RB:** TONY JONES JR., Jafar Armstrong, C'Bo Flemister, Jahmir Smith

**WR:** BRADEN LENZY, Joe Wilkins

**WR:** CHASE CLAYPOOL, Avery Davis

**WR:** Lawrence Keys III

**TE:** TOMMY TREMBLE, COLE KMET, Brock Wright

**LT:** AARON BANKS, Dillon Gibbons

**LG:** LIAM EICHENBERG

**C:** JARRETT PATTERSON

**RG:** TREVOR RUHLAND

**RT:** JOSH LUGG

#### DEFENSE

**SDE:** KHALID KAREEM, Justin Ademilola

**DT:** ADE OGUNDEJI, Jacob Lacey

**NT:** KURT HINISH, Ja'Mion Franklin

**Drop:** JAMIR JONES, Isaiah Foskey

**Mike:** DREW WHITE

**Buck:** ASMAR BILAL, Jordan Genmark Heath

**Rover:** JEREMIAH OWUSU-KORAMOAH, Paul Moala

**Stud:** ALOHI GILMAN

**Whip:** JALEN ELLIOTT

**Free:** Kyle Hamilton

**Field CB:** DONTÉ VAUGHN, Shawn Crawford, TaRiq Bracy

**Boundary CB:** TROY PRIDE JR.

#### SPECIAL TEAMS

**Kickoff Coverage:** Bo Bauer, Jahmir Smith, Jordan Genmark Heath, Paul Moala, Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah, Alohi Gilman, Chase Claypool, Jalen Elliott

**Kick Return:** Tommy Tremble, Bo Bauer, Houston Griffith, Jahmir Smith, Brock Wright, Paul Moala, Jonathan Jones, Mick Assaf, Arion Shinnar, Jordan Genmark Heath

**Punt Coverage:** Jalen Elliott, Bo Bauer, Alohi Gilman, Brock Wright, Kyle Hamilton, Dillan Gibbons, Asmar Bilal, Chase Claypool, John Dirkson

**Punt Return:** Houston Griffith, Isaiah Foskey, Jonathan Jones, Justin Ademilola, Avery Davis, Mick Assaf, TaRiq Bracy, Donte Vaughn, Paul Moala, Kyle Hamilton

**Kickoff:** Jonathan Doerer

**Placekicker:** Jonathan Doerer

**Punter:** Jay Bramblett

**Long/Short Snapper:** John Shannon

**Holder:** Jay Bramblett

**Kick Returner:** Lawrence Keys III

**Punt Returner:** Chris Finke

**Others:** None

Kmet led the team in both catches (five) and receiving yards (77). He did so with three catches of 18 yards or more and also chipped in with some quality blocking.

“Chris is obviously a huge part of what we do, so we had to try and find some things that would work for us like me and Chase trying to get open more,” Kmet said.



Junior tight end Cole Kmet posted team highs in receptions (five) and receiving yards (77).

PHOTO BY SPENCER ALLEN

### BIG PLAYS (25 YARDS OR MORE)

#### Stanford

- 3-8 ND27 Mills pass complete to Wilson for 27 yards and a touchdown

#### Notre Dame

- 1-10 ND20 Book pass complete to Tremble for 10 yards to the ND30, PENALTY STAN face mask (Reid) 15 yards to the ND45
- 1-10 STAN41 Book pass complete to Claypool for 41 yards and a touchdown
- 1-17 ND7 Book pass complete to Lenzy for 43 yards to the 50
- 4-2 STAN29 Book rush for 26 yards to the STAN3
- 2-16 ND22 Armstrong rush for 28 yards to the 50

### RED ZONE EFFICIENCY (INSIDE 20-YARD LINE)

	Poss.	TD	FG	No Score
Stanford	3	2	1	0
Notre Dame	4	4	0	0

### PLAY CHART (NO. OF PLAYS)

Yards	STAN	ND
Negative	1	8
0-5	44	33
6-9	15	8
10-19	12	9
20-29	3	7
30-39	0	0
40-49	0	2
50 or more	0	0

### STANFORD VS. NOTRE DAME QUARTER-BY-QUARTER COMPARISON

Stanford	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.	1st Half	2nd Half	Total
Time of Possession	12:06	7:17	3:43	6:43	19:23	10:26	29:49
Third-Down Conversions	3-4	1-5	0-3	0-2	4-9	0-5	4-14
Fourth-Down Conversions	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-1	0-0	1-1	1-1
Average Field Position	STAN-21	STAN-30	STAN-24	STAN-22	STAN-26	STAN-23	STAN-24
Notre Dame	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.	1st Half	2nd Half	Final
Time of Possession	2:54	7:43	11:17	8:17	10:37	19:34	30:11
Third-Down Conversions	0-1	2-4	2-6	0-3	2-5	2-9	4-14
Fourth-Down Conversions	0-0	0-0	1-1	1-1	0-0	2-2	2-2
Average Field Position	ND-20	ND-39	ND-25	ND-41	ND-33	ND-30	ND-31

Claypool led the offensive skill players with two touchdowns, including one that came on a 41-yard jump ball near the goal line near the end of the first half.

Lenzy, on the other hand, had a total of six touches — four on the ground and two through the air — for 96 yards (16.0 yards per attempt). He produced two plays of better than 20 yards, including a deep crossing route for 43. But his most impressive play may have been a 16-yard rush that shouldn't have gone past the line of scrimmage. Instead, Lenzy showed off his speed and big-play ability.

“Younger players have emerged through the season and, obviously, in the last five games it's been Braden Lenzy, and he showed that again today,” Kelly said.

### RUN GAME STILL A MYSTERY

The Irish run game was able to produce 190 yards against Stanford by utilizing six different ball carriers. Just looking at the stat sheet one would assume the running game for Notre Dame is operating at full strength. Watching the game would prove otherwise.

Notre Dame's lead rusher on the day was senior Tony Jones Jr. with 50 yards on 14 carries. That amounts to only 3.6 yards per carry. Notre Dame had a hard time running between the tackles against a normally porous Cardinal defense.

The offensive line was doing Jones and the rest of the rush attack no favors with six penalties for 49 yards on several false starts and holding infractions. Of the 190 rushing yards, only 69 came from true running backs Jones, C'Bo Flemister and Jahmir Smith for an average of 3.13 yards per carry.

To combat the lack of an interior running game, offensive coordinator Chip Long employed an outside attack with the likes of sophomore wideout Braden Lenzy, junior running back Jafar Armstrong and, at times, the scrambling ability of senior quarterback Ian Book. The Irish used jet sweeps, pitches, lead plays to get on the outside of the Stanford defense with their speed.

The bottom line is Notre Dame averaged over five yards per carry. Whether it was running between the tackles or outside, it was still a complementary part of the attack. ♦



## FROM THE LOCKER ROOM



The Fighting Irish won their first game at Stanford Stadium since 2007 and gave head coach Brian Kelly his first victory versus the Cardinal there in five tries.

PHOTO BY SPENCER ALLEN

### NOTRE DAME HEAD COACH BRIAN KELLY ...

**On winning at Stanford for the first time:** "Maybe earlier when I was here with teams, maybe we didn't have enough firepower to win some of those games. But the last couple — 2015 in particular — they kicked the field goal late, and we felt like our team should have won those games or were very capable of winning those games.

"It leaves kind of a bitter taste and so now we can move on and just say, all right, just prepare your football team and when you come here you can win football games."

**On defensive coordinator Clark Lea's in-game adjustments:** "What he really does well is adapt in-game to situations. There's a lot of good teaching that goes on, really good communication. That is one of his strengths.

"As I listen to the communication, I think it's clear and concise and can be replicated back to the young men."

**On if senior quarterback Ian Book is calmer than he was last season:** "He's a different person now. He was really in a great place. He found a stillness to him that he's never had before. And he plays the game differently now.

"His calmness is really about his confidence now and

what he can do. I thought the big play was the one out of the end zone where he finds Braden Lenzy. That's a big turning point in the game. And they dropped eight, but he showed patience in the pocket.

"We wouldn't have seen that earlier in the year. But I think it just goes to his mindset, his stillness that he has found, and the way he plays the game now. It's been really fun to watch his growth throughout the year."

**On if freshman defensive end Isaiah Foskey had flashed on special teams in practice:** "We weren't using him at all. But if we're going to use him up in the fourth game, we were going to use him everywhere we could. We felt like there were some areas in their special teams. Their punter is a new punter and his times [in getting the ball off] were, we felt, a little off that we could get there.

"We actually had another one where we went right past the punter and could have had another one. But [Foskey is] so long and we felt like we could get one with him in, and that's why we had him on punt."

### NOTRE DAME SENIOR DEFENSIVE END ADETOKUNBO OGUNDEJI ...

**On their ability to shut Stanford down in the last 40 minutes of the game:** "They made some plays, made some throws down the field on us in the first half. And then we had to adjust in the game, during the halftime and make some adjustments.

"We went out there, we understood the game plan, saw our mistakes, and then went out there and played."

**On if they were able to wear down an inexperienced Stanford offensive line:** "Yeah, absolutely. We knew they had some freshmen in there and they had some injury issues like us, but we knew we could take advantage of it.

"We got some senior guys who stepped up and some younger guys who stepped up. ... We knew we had to step up and make some big plays."

**On how the blocked punt energized the team:** "It was definitely a game changer. Special teams, we just talked about it, special teams was a big thing for us this whole game.

"Foskey played a great game. John Shannon was incredible. All those guys were just balling for us, so special teams definitely got a spark for us in that first half."

### NOTRE DAME JUNIOR TIGHT END COLE KMET ...

**On the offense gaining its footing after a slow start:** "I feel whenever we play Stanford, it is always like that. We are trying to get something going.

"We obviously wore them down throughout the game and we were able to start hitting stuff as the game went on we started executing better."

**On what three-straight 10-win seasons mean to the program:** "It shows where we've come from. I came in here after the 4-8 season and guys, like in Ade's class, they stepped up and showed us the way and how to do things.

"I think that's really shown throughout the weight room in the offseason and then obviously leading into the season."

— Andrew Mentock and Vince DeDario

# Irish Win All Three Phases Against The Cardinal

**H**ere are several observations from Notre Dame's 45-24 win over Stanford.

## DEFENSE: STRONG SECOND-HALF SHOWING

The defense struggled to match the intensity of the Stanford offense early, allowing the Cardinal to score on a seven-play, 75-yard drive to open the game. The Irish ended up allowing 17 points and 278 total yards in the first half, with the majority coming through the air.

Right about the midway portion of the second quarter, the defense found its sea legs and really tightened down against the Stanford attack. The Fighting Irish allowed only 116 total yards in the second half, with a mere 22 yards coming in the third quarter when the Irish put the game away.

The most disappointing aspect early in the game was the absence of any kind of pass rush from the Notre Dame front seven. This allowed Stanford quarterback Davis Mills to sit back and pick the defense apart to the tune of 196 yards and two touchdowns.

Senior Ade Ogundeji ended up starting at three technique in place of Myron Tagovailoa-Amosa, who was out with an injury. Consequently there was a lot of speed on the field for the Irish, but they were just unable to get to Mills.

Ogundeji was able to make an excellent play to close out the game with a speed rush and strip of Mills in the end zone, which was recovered by senior defensive end Khalid Kareem for the final touchdown.

## OFFENSE: BOOK TO CLAYPOOL, A WINNING COMBINATION

The offense ended the contest with a pretty nice stat line of 445 total yards (255 through the air and 190 on the ground). It finished up as a relatively balanced night, but that is not how it started.

Notre Dame had no intention of running the ball early in the game and put the game in the hands of senior quarterback Ian Book. Most of the rushing yards came late in the game, but for the first time in four games Book wasn't the leading rusher.

Book had one of his typical days



Sophomore defensive end Justin Ademilola's blocked punt recovery and return to the Stanford 1-yard line capped a game-changing play for the Fighting Irish late in the second quarter.

PHOTO BY SPENCER ALLEN

under center for Notre Dame. At times he looked flustered and itchy in the pocket, and at times he looked poised and effective in both the pass and run game. The opening drive was fantastic for the Irish and Book. He went 4-of-5 passing for all 70 yards of the drive, and the one incompleting coming on a drop by sophomore wide receiver Braden Lenzy.

Book was decisive, patient and in complete control. In the third quarter, he had an excellent play for 43 yards to Lenzy where he was able to buy time with his legs and get outside the pocket. It was essential to do this because he had to wait for Lenzy to come all the way across the field and get open. He then threw a perfect strike that led Lenzy and allowed him to get up the field after the catch. On the same drive, Book showed why he is so dangerous with his legs. He converted a fourth-down play by scrambling to his right and picking up 26 yards.

Senior wideout Chase Claypool was once again outstanding. Stanford did its best to take him out of the game early by bracketing him in coverage, but that only worked for so long. In the second quarter, Book went to Claypool on back-to-back plays for a total of 55 yards and a score.

The latter was a beautiful throw by Book to the back shoulder of Claypool, which is where he absolutely

thrives. He went up and high pointed the ball before the defender even turned around. In a nutshell, that is why Claypool is such a matchup nightmare for Irish opponents and will continue to be at the next level.

## SPECIAL TEAMS: WINNING THE DAY FOR THE IRISH

Trailing 17-7 late in the second quarter, Notre Dame seized momentum when true freshman defensive end Isaiah Foskey blocked a Stanford punt and sophomore defensive end Justin Ademilola returned it to the 1-yard line. Three plays later, Book found sophomore tight end Tommy Tremble for a touchdown.

Senior long snapper John Shannon also got into the action by recovering a muffed punt return by the Cardinal that led to a field goal by junior kicker Jonathan Doerer early in the fourth quarter. Shannon also made a great play diving into the end zone to save a punt that was downed on the 4-yard line, which directly led to the strip and touchdown by Ogundeji and Kareem on the very next play. Not a bad game by the senior from Lake Forest, Ill. ♦



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# 2019 Notre Dame Cumulative Football Statistics

Scoring By Quarters	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Notre Dame	101	144	93	107	—	445
Opponents	44	69	33	78	—	224

Rushing.....G	No.	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg.	TD	Long	Yds./G
Jones Jr., Tony.....11	133	743	21	722	5.4	5	43	65.6
Book, Ian.....12	105	610	94	516	4.9	4	53	43.0
Lenzy, Braden.....8	10	188	0	188	18.8	2	61	23.5
Smith, Jahmir.....10	42	191	11	180	4.3	2	40	18.0
Flemister, C'Bo.....8	42	145	13	132	3.1	5	12	16.5
Jurkovec, Phil.....6	22	156	26	130	5.9	0	27	21.7
Armstrong, Jafar.....8	38	135	21	114	3.0	0	28	14.2
Keys III, Lawrence.....11	6	46	1	45	7.5	0	15	4.1
Assaf, Mick.....12	9	37	3	34	3.8	0	13	2.8
Clark, Brendon.....2	5	33	0	33	6.6	0	14	16.5
Williams, Kyren.....4	4	28	2	26	6.5	0	14	6.5
Davis, Avery.....10	6	19	9	10	1.7	0	7	1.0
Finke, Chris.....12	1	7	0	7	7.0	0	7	0.6
Young, Michael.....3	1	2	0	2	2.0	0	2	0.7
Henry, Nolan.....2	1	1	0	1	1.0	0	1	0.5
Team.....6	11	0	21	-21	-1.9	0	0	-3.5
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>2,341</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>2,119</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>176.6</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>2,313</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>1,927</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>160.6</b>

Passing.....G	Att.	Com.	Pct.	Int.	Yards	TD	Long	Yds./G
Book, Ian.....12	371	220	59.3	6	2,787	33	70	232.2
Jurkovec, Phil.....6	16	12	75.0	0	222	2	52	37.0
Clark, Brendon.....2	1	1	100.0	0	22	1	22	11.0
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3,031</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>252.6</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,964</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>163.7</b>

Receiving.....G	Rec.	Yards	Avg.	TD	Long	Yds./G
Claypool, Chase.....12	59	891	15.1	12	47	74.2
Kmet, Cole.....10	41	482	11.8	6	37	48.2
Finke, Chris.....12	35	410	11.7	4	54	34.2
Tremble, Tommy.....12	15	174	11.6	4	29	14.5
Keys III, Lawrence.....11	13	134	10.3	0	28	12.2
Jones Jr., Tony.....11	13	103	7.9	1	24	9.4
Armstrong, Jafar.....8	12	92	7.7	0	26	11.5
McKinley, Javon.....9	11	268	24.4	4	65	29.8
Lenzy, Braden.....8	10	247	24.7	2	70	30.9
Davis, Avery.....10	10	124	12.4	2	59	12.4
Young, Michael.....3	6	21	3.5	0	8	7.0
Wright, Brock.....12	2	45	22.5	0	40	3.8
Smith, Jahmir.....10	2	12	6.0	0	6	1.2
Takacs, George.....5	2	12	6.0	1	10	2.4
Flemister, C'Bo.....8	1	13	13.0	0	13	1.6
Williams, Kyren.....4	1	3	3.0	0	3	0.8
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>3,031</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>252.6</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>1,964</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>163.7</b>

Total Offense.....G	Rush	Pass	Total	Yds./G
Book, Ian.....12	516	2,787	3,303	275.2
Jones Jr., Tony.....11	722	0	722	65.6
Jurkovec, Phil.....6	130	222	352	58.7
Lenzy, Braden.....8	188	0	188	23.5
Smith, Jahmir.....10	180	0	180	18.0
Flemister, C'Bo.....8	132	0	132	16.5
Armstrong, Jafar.....8	114	0	114	14.2
Clark, Brendon.....2	33	22	55	27.5
Keys III, Lawrence.....11	45	0	45	4.1
Assaf, Mick.....12	34	0	34	2.8
Williams, Kyren.....4	26	0	26	6.5
Davis, Avery.....10	10	0	10	1.0
Finke, Chris.....12	7	0	7	0.6
Young, Michael.....3	2	0	2	0.7
Henry, Nolan.....2	1	0	1	0.5
Team.....6	-21	0	-21	-3.5
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>2,119</b>	<b>3,031</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>429.2</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>1,927</b>	<b>1,964</b>	<b>3,891</b>	<b>324.2</b>

All-Purpose.....G	Rush	Rec.	PR	KR	IR	Total	Yds./G
Claypool, Chase.....12	0	891	0	0	0	891	74.2
Jones Jr., Tony.....11	722	103	0	0	0	825	75.0
Finke, Chris.....12	7	410	181	0	0	598	49.8
Book, Ian.....12	516	0	0	0	0	516	43.0
Kmet, Cole.....10	0	482	0	0	0	482	48.2
Lenzy, Braden.....8	188	247	0	0	0	435	54.4
Keys III, Lawrence.....11	45	134	6	194	0	379	34.5
McKinley, Javon.....9	0	268	0	0	0	268	29.8
Armstrong, Jafar.....8	114	92	0	46	0	252	31.5
Smith, Jahmir.....10	180	12	0	0	0	192	19.2
Tremble, Tommy.....12	0	174	0	0	0	174	14.5
Flemister, C'Bo.....8	132	13	0	0	0	145	18.1
Davis, Avery.....10	10	124	0	0	0	134	13.4
Jurkovec, Phil.....6	130	0	0	0	0	130	21.7
Young, Michael.....3	2	21	0	48	0	71	23.7
Hamilton, Kyle.....12	0	0	0	0	66	66	5.5
Williams, Kyren.....4	26	3	0	35	0	64	16.0
Wright, Brock.....12	0	45	0	0	0	45	3.8
Assaf, Mick.....12	34	0	0	0	0	34	2.8
Clark, Brendon.....2	33	0	0	0	0	33	16.5
Foskey, Isaiah.....4	0	0	23	0	0	23	5.8
Pride Jr., Troy.....12	0	0	0	0	19	19	1.6
Takacs, George.....5	0	12	0	0	0	12	2.4
Simon, Shayne.....10	0	0	0	9	0	9	0.9
Elliott, Jalen.....12	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.2
Wilkins, Joe.....5	0	0	2	0	0	2	0.4
Henry, Nolan.....2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.5
Team.....6	-21	0	0	0	0	-21	-3.5
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>2,119</b>	<b>3,031</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>5,781</b>	<b>481.8</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>1,927</b>	<b>1,964</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4,562</b>	<b>380.2</b>

Punt Returns.....G	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD	Long	Yds./G
Finke, Chris.....12	18	181	10.1	0	46	15.1
Foskey, Isaiah.....4	1	23	23.0	0	0	5.8
Keys III, Lawrence.....11	1	6	6.0	0	6	0.5
Wilkins, Joe.....5	2	2	1.0	0	2	0.4
Team.....6	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>17.7</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5.3</b>

Kick Returns.....G	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD	Long	Yds./G
Keys III, Lawrence.....11	10	194	19.4	0	45	17.6
Young, Michael.....3	2	48	24.0	0	32	16.0
Armstrong, Jafar.....8	3	46	15.3	0	20	5.8
Williams, Kyren.....4	2	35	17.5	0	19	8.8
Simon, Shayne.....10	1	9	9.0	0	9	0.9
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>27.7</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>48.7</b>

Punting.....G	No.	Avg.	Long	Blk.	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Bramblett, Jay.....12	59	39.6	61	0	1	23	5	18
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>39.6</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>

Field Goals.....G	Att.	Made	Long	Blk.
Doerer, Jonathan.....12	16	13	52	0
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>

Defense.....G	Solo	Assist	Total	TFL-Yds.	Sack-Yds.	PD	FF	FR
White, Drew.....12	45	30	75	8-17	2-3	1	0	2
Bilal, Asmar.....12	44	28	72	9-21	0-0	1	0	1
Owusu-Koramoah, J.....12	47	24	71	9.5-33	2.5-14	4	1	1
Gilman, Alohi.....12	30	36	66	3-10	1-6	2	2	1
Kareem, Khalid.....12	23	22	45	10-44	5.5-33	1	3	1
Elliott, Jalen.....12	27	14	41	0-0	0-0	2	0	0
Hamilton, Kyle.....12	25	14	39	1-1	0-0	6	0	0
Pride Jr., Troy.....12	24	13	37	0-0	0-0	5	0	0
Bracy, Tariq.....11	24	8	32	0-0	0-0	6	1	2
Ogundeji, Adetokunbo.....12	16	16	32	6-25	3.5-18	0	3	1
Bauer, Bo.....12	18	9	27	2-4	0-0	0	0	0
Crawford, Shaun.....10	19	6	25	1-9	0-0	2	0	0
Jones, Jamir.....10	13	11	24	6.5-32	4.5-28	1	2	1
Ademilola, Jayson.....10	9	15	24	4-12	0-0	1	0	0
Tagovailoa-Amosa, M.....11	13	8	21	2.5-5	0.5-1	1	0	1
Okwara, Julian.....9	8	10	18	6-52	4-48	0	2	1
Hinish, Kurt.....12	7	7	14	4.5-12	2-9	0	1	0
Lacey, Jacob.....11	7	7	14	1.5-3	0.5-2	0	0	0
Moala, Paul.....12	6	8	14	1-6	0-0	0	1	1
Vaughn, Donte.....9	5	9	14	0-0	0-0	5	0	0
Genmark Heath, Jordan.....12	6	4	10	1-6	0-0	0	0	0
Oghouff, Ovie.....8	1	9	10	1-4	1-4	1	0	0
Ademilola, Justin.....8	6	3	9	1-2	0-0	0	0	0
Simon, Shayne.....10	2	7	9	1.5-2	0-0	0	0	0
Lamb, Jack.....8	4	3	7	2-11	1-7	0	1	1
Brown, DJ.....9	3	4	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Cross III, Howard.....4	3	4	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Hayes, Daelin.....4	5	1	6	3-11	1-7	0	0	1
Claypool, Chase.....12	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	1
Griffith, Houston.....12	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Foskey, Isaiah.....4	1	4	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Agoro, Temitope.....12	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Franklin, Ja'Mion.....8	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Shannon, John.....12	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	1
Spears, Hunter.....3	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Kmet, Cole.....10	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Pelini, Patrick.....3	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Ekwonu, Osita.....2	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Flemister, C'Bo.....8	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Jones Jr., Tony.....11	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Wardlow, Kofi.....2	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wright, Brock.....12	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Jones, Jonathan.....12	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wallace, KJ.....4	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Osafu-Mensah, Nana.....2	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

Interception Returns.....G	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD	Long	Yds./G
Hamilton, Kyle.....12	4	66	16.5	1	34	5.5
Elliott, Jalen.....12	2	2	1.0	0	2	0.2
Pride Jr., Troy.....12	1	19	19.0	0	19	1.6
Crawford, Shaun.....10	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
Gilman, Alohi.....12	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
<b>Total.....12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7.2</b>
<b>Opponent.....12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1.9</b>

# Class Of 2021 Commitment Candidates For Notre Dame

BY MIKE SINGER

Notre Dame is putting the final touches on its 2020 class and will likely sign a top-20 group nationally per Rivals. The Fighting Irish wrapped up most of that haul by the end of the summer, which allowed the staff to get a head start on 2021 recruiting.

The Irish already have seven pledges in 2021, and heading into the week of Thanksgiving that group was ranked No. 1 nationally by Rivals. The highest-ranked commit of the class is Blake Fisher, the country's No. 4 offensive tackle and No. 17 overall prospect according to Rivals.

Matthews (N.C.) Weddington's Will Shipley, the nation's top all-purpose back and No. 53 overall prospect according to Rivals, is at the top of offensive coordinator Chip Long's wish list. Shipley doesn't plan to announce anytime soon, but whenever he does consider a commitment, Notre Dame will be on his short list.

The 5-11, 200-pounder was already strongly considering Notre Dame, and the Irish shot up his list after he visited for the USC game Oct. 12. His visit checked all of his boxes.

Notre Dame has offered four backs in the 2021 class, and Shipley seems to be the top priority for the staff.

Notre Dame would love to have Wyatt Milum blocking for Shipley for a few years. Milum, a 6-6, 250-pounder who is listed as the nation's No. 20 offensive tackle and No. 158 overall recruit by Rivals, checked out Notre Dame for the Virginia Tech game Nov. 2. That was his second visit of the year — he was also in South Bend during the spring and landed an offer from the Irish on that trip.

Milum's list of his top six schools consists of Alabama, Kentucky, Notre Dame, Penn State, Virginia Tech and

West Virginia. He and his family came away very impressed with the Irish football program and its academic presentation.

There are a handful of uncommitted wide receivers who hold offers from Notre Dame, but there are just a couple who are trending toward the Irish. The program has already secured 2021 receiver pledges from Athens (Ga.) Academy's Deion Colzie, the Rivals' No. 95 overall recruit in the nation, and Pickerington (Ohio) Central's Lorenzo Styles, the No. 28 prospect in the land.

Numbers are always fluid, but it's looking like the Irish will take one more receiver in the class. That prospect may be East Lansing (Mich.) High standout Andre Anthony, the No. 12 recruit in Michigan and the No. 56 wide receiver in the country.

The 6-2, 165-pounder is high on Michigan and Michigan State, and is also enamored with the Fighting Irish. Anthony participated in a prospect camp at Notre Dame over the summer, visited for the New Mexico game Sept. 14 — landing an offer from the Irish a few days after that contest — and returned to South Bend for the USC game Oct. 12. Anthony just can't get enough of Notre Dame, and he'll likely be back in the offseason.



Matthews (N.C.) Weddington's Will Shipley, the No. 1 all-purpose back and No. 53 overall prospect nationally according to Rivals, is one of Notre Dame's top targets on the 2021 board.

PHOTO COURTESY RIVALS.COM

The other pass catcher to keep an eye on is Atlanta Pace Academy's Jayden Thomas, who Rivals rates as the No. 20 wide receiver and No. 108 overall prospect nationally. The 6-2, 188-pounder camped at Notre Dame during the summer of 2018, and he and wide receivers coach Del Alexander have kept in contact since then.

During a Nov. 2 visit, he received an offer from the Irish. Notre Dame's academics are highly intriguing to Thomas, who attends a very well respected school

in Georgia. He also holds offers from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Michigan and Ohio State.

There are also a few defensive back prospects the Irish are in a strong position to land.

Indianapolis Ben Davis cornerback Daylan Carnell, the nation's No. 19 athlete and No. 231 overall recruit per Rivals, has had high interest in Notre Dame for several months. He visited the campus Oct. 12 and had valuable feedback from defensive back coaches Todd Lyght and Terry Joseph.

The 6-1, 185-pounder has offers from Indiana, Louisville, Michigan State, Nebraska, Purdue and others. If Notre Dame makes a push for Carnell, he will likely commit to the Irish.

Bolingbrook (Ill.) High's Justin Walters, the nation's No. 14 safety according to Rivals, is a Notre Dame lean at this time. He received an offer from the Irish during a visit in September. Look for the 6-1, 170-pound, hard-hitting safety to get back to South Bend this offseason.

Muskego (Wis.) High's Hunter Wohler, the No. 6 safety and No. 199 overall prospect, added Notre Dame to his offer list during his visit Nov. 2. Ohio State and Wisconsin will be tough to beat, but Wohler has high interest in Notre Dame. ♦



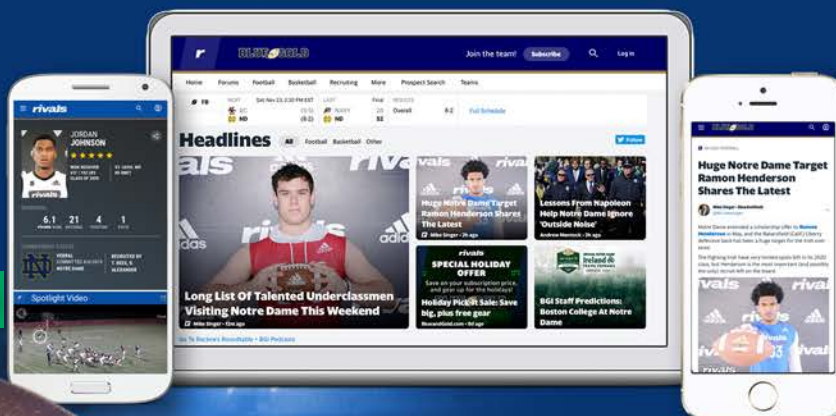
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- ◆ Comments on each signee from national analysts and our staff analyst Mike Singer
- ◆ A look ahead to the class of 2021

**Which Members Of The Class Of 2020  
Will End Up Joining The Irish?**

# Notre Dame Is Battling For Top Remaining 2020 Target

Notre Dame extended a scholarship offer to Ramon Henderson in May, and the Bakersfield (Calif.) Liberty defensive back has been a huge target for the Fighting Irish ever since.

The Irish have limited spots left in their 2020 class, but Henderson is the most important — and possibly the only — recruit left on the board.

Other schools are pursuing the No. 49 recruit in California, though. He took an official visit to Oklahoma in August and checked out Utah Nov. 15-17.

"It was really cool out there; I liked it a lot," the 6-3, 180-pounder said about his Utah visit. "They had a lot to offer. My mom and I went out there not expecting that much, but we came out happy. We had a fun time."

Henderson officially visited Notre Dame Sept. 27-29, and the feeling coming after that visit was that it would be just a matter of time before he would commit to the Irish. However, Henderson loved his trip to Utah, and he may take two more official visits before deciding on a school with Tennessee and UCLA on his radar.

## RAMON HENDERSON



Liberty H.S.  
Bakersfield, Calif.

Status: Offered

Class: 2020

Position: Athlete

Ht.: 6-3 • Wt.: 180

Rivals Rankings: No. 49 player in California



Henderson plans on announcing a commitment Dec. 17, the day before the early National Signing Day for the 2020 class. He understands that prolonging his decision may force the Irish coaching staff to consider other options.

like me a lot. They've been showing love and have been more aggressive.

"I've been telling them that I've been holding off for a while. That's how the game is played. If I'm holding off, I wouldn't be mad at them for going and looking at someone else."

Henderson is set to graduate early and enroll at his school of choice in January. Recruiting analyst Tom Lemming refers to Henderson, a Rivals three-star talent, as one of the most underrated football players in Southern California.

"He really impresses you right off the bat with his blazing speed, instincts, timing and anticipation," Lemming said. "He, no doubt, has what it

**"They've been squeezing on me more. They've said to not have too much fun on my trips because they want me at Notre Dame and that they like me a lot. They've been showing love and have been more aggressive."**

Henderson on Notre Dame

"They've been squeezing on me more," Henderson said about Notre Dame. "They've said to not have too much fun on my trips because they want me at Notre Dame and that they

takes to play either wide receiver or cornerback at the next level.

"He's a rising star who shows the ability to someday dominate."

— Mike Singer

## Nation's Top 2021 Athlete Has Interest In The Irish

Pinson (Ala.) Valley's Ga'Quincy McKinstry is ranked as the No. 1 athlete in the 2021 class by Rivals, which raises the question: will he play offense or defense at the next level?

He is an elite talent at both wide receiver and defensive back, and colleges are giving McKinstry the option to play either side of the ball.

"They want me to play what I want to play, but at the next level, I'm going to play defense," the 6-1, 175-pounder stated. "That's where I feel more comfortable and is the best for me in the long term."

McKinstry, who Rivals ranks as the No. 1 recruit in Alabama and the No. 32 overall prospect nationally, has played a big role in helping Pinson Valley to a 10-2 record and the 6A Alabama state playoff semifinals Nov. 29. His focus has been on his high school team, understandably so.

"I'm not really too much into re-

cruiting," McKinstry said. "I'm just focusing on my team more than anything."

Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, LSU, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ohio State and several others have offered McKinstry a scholarship. He insists that he is very open in his recruiting process.

"Everybody is basically in the same boat right now," he said.

Notre Dame offered McKinstry in March and has kept in communication with him this fall, but the Irish should be considered a long shot to land his commitment.

He does have interest in the Irish, and he would like to visit in the offseason to learn more about the program and connection with the coaching staff.

"Notre Dame is a good school," he said. "I like the way they play. I got to see them at Georgia, and their secondary looked good."

McKinstry recently spoke with the

**"Notre Dame is a good school. I like the way they play. I got to see them at Georgia, and their secondary looked good."**

McKinstry

## GA'QUINCY MCKINSTRY



Pinson Valley H.S.  
Pinson, Ala.

Status: Offered

Class: 2021

Position: Athlete

Ht.: 6-1 • Wt.: 175

Rivals Rankings: No. 1 player in Alabama, and No. 1 athlete and No. 32 overall player nationally



Fighting Irish coaching staff.

"They were just checking in on me, asking how I've been playing," he said.

McKinstry has been invited to play in the Under All-American Game and the All-American Bowl.

"His footwork is outstanding on both sides of the ball," recruiting analyst Tom Lemming said. "He's just a great all-around athlete with the instincts and quick-twitch athletic ability that will allow him to play on Sundays within four years."

— Mike Singer



# Class Of 2020 Scholarship Offer Master List

## Quarterback

*Drew Pyne, 6-1, 175, New Canaan, Conn. (New Canaan)*

## Running Back

*Chris Tyree, 5-10, 185, Chester, Va. (Thomas Dale)*

## Wide Receiver

*Jordan Johnson, 6-2, 182, St. Louis (De Smet Jesuit)*

*Xavier Watts, 6-1, 180, Omaha, Neb. (Burke)*

*Jay Brunelle, 6-2, 200, Shrewsbury, Mass. (Saint John's)*

## Tight End

*Kevin Bauman, 6-5, 225, Red Bank, N.J. (Red Bank Catholic)*

*Michael Mayer, 6-5, 235, Park Hills, Ky. (Covington Catholic)*

## Offensive Line

*Tosh Baker, 6-8, 275, Phoenix (Pinnacle)*

*Michael Carmody, 6-6, 280, Mars, Pa. (Mars)*

## Defensive End

*Jordan Botelho, 6-3, 217, Honolulu (St. Louis)*

*Alexander Ehrensberger, 6-7, 235, Dusseldorf, Germany (Fryeburg Academy)*

*Rylie Mills, 6-5, 270, Lake Forest, Ill. (Lake Forest)*

## Defensive Tackle

*Aidan Keanaaina, 6-3, 305, Denver (Mullen)*

## Linebacker

None

## Cornerback

*Landen Bartleson, 6-0, 185, Danville, Ky. (Boyle County)*

*Ramon Henderson, 6-3, 180, Bakersfield, Calif. (Liberty)*

*Clarence Lewis, 6-0, 180, Middletown, N.J. (Mater Dei)*

*Caleb Offord, 6-1, 175, Southaven, Miss. (Southaven)*

## Safety

None

## Athlete

None

## Specialist

*Alex Peitsch, 6-2, 220, Washington, D.C. (St. John's Collegiate)*

*Commitments in bold italics*

## RIVALS 2020 TEAM RECRUITING RANKINGS

*As of Nov. 27*

Rk.	School	Commits	Rk.	School	Commits
1.	LSU	23	6.	Georgia	16
2.	Clemson	20	7.	Oregon	23
3.	Ohio State	25	8.	Texas	18
4.	Alabama	23	9.	Michigan	23
5.	Texas A&M	20	10.	Auburn	20
			15.	Notre Dame	17

## 2020 Master List Changes

Prospects Removed: None.

## RECRUITING NOTES

• Notre Dame extended two new scholarship offers in the 2021 class in the 48 hours before it faced Boston College Nov. 23. The Irish dipped into Florida with a scholarship tender to Vero Beach (Fla.) High defensive end **Keanu Koht**. The three-star prospect also holds offers from Auburn, Florida, Nebraska, Penn State, Tennessee and several others. Koht received the scholarship offer from Irish defensive line coach Mike Elston.

Notre Dame also offered Gardena (Calif.) Serra athlete **Devin Kirkwood**. The 6-4, 175-pounder, who is rated as a three-star prospect and the No. 46 player in the Golden State by Rivals, visited Notre Dame for the Boston College game and earned the offer from head coach Brian Kelly.

Kirkwood was surprised and at a loss for words about his new offer from Notre Dame. The Irish joined BYU, Nevada, Oregon State, San Jose State, USC, Utah and Utah State on his offer sheet. Kirkwood could play receiver or defensive back at the next level, and Notre Dame is looking at him for either position.

• Notre Dame offered its first running back prospect in the 2022 class. Shillington (Pa.) Governor Mifflin running back **Nicholas Singleton** had a great visit to Notre Dame for the USC game Oct. 12.

The Irish staff invited Singleton back to campus for the Boston College matchup, and he jumped on the opportunity on rather short notice. The 5-11, 191-pound Singleton left South Bend armed with a new offer from the Irish.

"Coach Kelly talked to me in his office about how



**The Fighting Irish have extended an offer to Devin Kirkwood, a 6-4, 175-pound three-star class of 2021 athlete from Gardena (Calif.) Serra.**

PHOTO COURTESY RIVALS.COM

great of a player I was," Singleton said. "I'm really excited."

• Cambridge (Mass.) Buckingham Browne & Nichols class of 2022 inside linebacker **Tyler Martin** also checked out Notre Dame's 40-7 triumph against the Eagles, and the sophomore standout loved his time in South Bend.

"Overall, the visit was awesome," Martin said. "I learned a lot about the Notre Dame football team and program. I think the trip went really well."

Martin holds offers from Boston College, Michigan, Nebraska, Syracuse, Vanderbilt, Virginia and

Virginia Tech. The Irish haven't offered yet, but if they do, they will be a school he considers.

"The facilities that Notre Dame has are second to none, especially with the new indoor building," the 6-3, 235-pounder said. "I was really in awe of how amazing the facilities are and just the space that there is to do all the things necessary to compete as a top 15 program."

— Mike Singer

Follow @BGI\_MikeSinger on Twitter for daily recruiting updates!

# Commitment Updates Games played Nov. 21-23 unless otherwise noted

## Class Of 2020

• **CB Landen Bartleson:** Rushed once for 54 yards and a score, caught a pass for 71 yards and a touchdown, plus added six tackles, one sack, an interception and a pass defended to lead Danville (Ky.) Boyle County (13-0) to a 55-0 triumph versus Covington (Ky.) Scott (8-5) in the quarterfinals of the 4A Kentucky state playoffs. *Next game: vs. Paintsville (Ky.) Johnson Central (13-0) in the semifinals of the 4A Kentucky state playoffs Nov. 29.*

• **TE Kevin Bauman:** Caught two passes for 14 yards in Red Bank (N.J.) Catholic's (5-4) 10-3 loss to Middletown (N.J.) Mater Dei (8-3) in the semifinals of the New Jersey Non-Public Group 3 state playoffs. *Season completed.*

• **DE Jordan Botelho:** Tallied five tackles for Honolulu St. Louis (11-0) in a 35-0 triumph over Mililani (Hawaii) High (8-4) in the semifinals of the Division I Open Hawaii state playoffs ... St. Louis is ranked as the No. 6 team in the country by MaxPreps. *Next game: vs. Kahuku (Hawaii) High (9-3) in the championship game of the Division I Open Hawaii state playoffs Nov. 29.*

• **WR Jay Brunelle:** Caught 10 passes for 79 yards and a touchdown for Shrewsbury (Mass.) Saint John's (8-3) in a 64-33 defeat at the hands of Springfield (Mass.) Central (10-2) in the Division 3 Massachusetts state playoffs. *Next game: at Worcester (Mass.) St. Peter-Marian (4-6) in an exhibition game Nov. 28.*

• **WR Jordan Johnson:** Recorded an interception to help lead St. Louis De Smet (13-0) past Peculiar (Mo.) Raymore-Peculiar (10-3) 37-0 in the semifinals of the Class 6 Missouri state playoffs. *Next game: vs. Joplin (Mo.) High (13-0) in the championship game of the Class 6 Missouri state playoffs Nov. 30.*

• **CB Clarence Lewis:** Caught three passes for 24 yards in Middletown (N.J.) Mater Dei's (8-3) 10-3 triumph against Red Bank (N.J.) Catholic (5-4) in the semifinals of the New Jersey Non-Public Group 3 state playoffs. *Next game: vs. Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic (6-4) the championship game of the New Jersey Non-Public Group 3 state playoffs Dec. 7.*

• **TE Michael Mayer:** Caught three passes for 31 yards and a score, plus notched five tackles and a tackle for loss, in Park Hills (Ky.) Covington Catholic's (12-0) 49-9 win against Berea (Ky.) Madison Southern (7-6) in the quarterfinals of the 5A Kentucky state playoffs. *Next game: vs. Bowling Green (Ky.) High (9-3) in the semifinals of the 5A Kentucky state playoffs Nov. 29.*

• **LS Alex Peitsch:** Washington (D.C.) St. John's College High (7-5) lost 16-14 to Olney (Md.) Good Counsel (9-3) in the championship game of the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference playoffs. *Season completed.*



**Athens (Ga.) Academy's Deion Colzie notched seven receptions for 183 yards and three touchdowns to help advance his team to the quarterfinals of the Georgia Class A private school state playoffs.**

PHOTO COURTESY RIVALS.COM

• **QB Drew Pyne:** New Canaan (Conn.) High (7-2) had a bye. *Next game: at Darien (Conn.) High (9-0) Nov. 28.*

• **RB Chris Tyree:** Rushed nine times for 115 yards and a touchdown in a 36-6 triumph for Chester (Va.) Thomas Dale (9-3) against Virginia Beach (Va.) Ocean Lakes (8-4) in the second round of the 6A Virginia state playoffs. *Next game: vs. Chesapeake (Va.) Oscar Smith (11-1) in the quarterfinals of the 6A Virginia state playoffs Nov. 29.*

## Class Of 2021

• **TE Cane Berrong:** Caught three passes for 29 yards in Hartwell (Ga.) Hart County's (10-2) thrilling 32-29 double-overtime win over Blackshear (Ga.) Pierce County (11-1) in the second round of the 3A Georgia state playoffs. *Next game: at Norcross (Ga.) Greater Atlanta Christian (11-1) in the quarterfinals of the 3A Georgia state playoffs Nov. 29.*

• **QB Tyler Buchner:** Completed 20 of 27 passes for 376 yards with six touchdowns to lead La Jolla (Calif.) The Bishop's School (12-0) to a 44-7 victory versus Solana Beach (Calif.) Santa Fe Christian (7-4) in the semifinals of the California Interscholastic Federation San Diego Section Division II playoffs. *Next game: vs. Oceanside (Calif.) El Camino (7-6) in the championship game of the California Interscholastic Federation San Diego Section Division II playoffs Nov. 29.*

• **WR Deion Colzie:** Hauled in seven passes for 183 yards and

three touchdowns in Athens (Ga.) Academy's (11-0) 52-7 romp over Columbus (Ga.) Brookstone (7-5) in the second round of the Class A private Georgia state playoffs. *Next game: vs. McDonough (Ga.) Eagle's Landing Christian Academy (10-1) in the quarterfinals of the Class A private Georgia state playoffs Nov. 29.*

• **DL Gabriel Rubio:** Recorded two tackles and a sack for St. Peters (Mo.) Lutheran of St. Charles (10-3) in a 26-0 loss to St. Louis Trinity Catholic (9-3) in the quarterfinals of the Class 3 Missouri state playoffs. *Season completed.*

• **WR Lorenzo Styles:** Helped lead Pickerington (Ohio) Central (12-1) to a 23-7 triumph versus Groveport (Ohio) Groverport-Madison in the regional final of the Division I Ohio state playoffs. *Next game: vs. Mentor (Ohio) High (13-0) in the semifinals of the Division I Ohio state playoffs Nov. 29.*

*Season completed: OL Tosh Baker of Phoenix Pinnacle, OL Michael Carmody of Mars (Pa.) High, OL Greg Crippen of Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy, OL Blake Fisher of Avon (Ind.) High, DL Aidan Keanaaina of Denver Mullen, DL Rylie Mills of Lake Forest (Ill.) High, CB Caleb Offord of Southaven (Miss.) High and WR Xavier Watts of Omaha (Neb.) Burke.*



# Class Of 2021 Scholarship Offer Master List

## Quarterback

**Tyler Buchner, 6-2, 210, La Jolla, Calif. (The Bishop's School)**

## Running Back

Donovan Edwards, 5-11, 193, West Bloomfield, Mich. (West Bloomfield)  
Will Shipley, 5-11, 200, Matthews, N.C. (Weddington)  
Camar Wheaton, 6-1, 190, Garland, Texas (Lakeview Centennial)  
Corey Kiner, 5-9, 209, Cincinnati (Roger Bacon)

## Wide Receiver

Andrel Anthony, 6-2, 165, East Lansing, Mich. (East Lansing)  
Beaux Collins, 6-4, 195, Bellflower, Calif. (St. John Bosco)  
**Deion Colzie, 6-4, 180, Athens, Ga. (Athens Academy)**  
Cristian Dixon, 6-2, 185, Santa Ana, Calif. (Mater Dei)  
Emeka Egbuka, 6-1, 180, Steilacoom, Wash. (Steilacoom)  
Chris Hilton, 6-0, 166, Zachary, La. (Zachary)  
Jaquez Smith, 6-0, 190, Atlanta (Hapeville Charter)  
**Lorenzo Styles Jr., 6-1, 170, Pickerington, Ohio (Pickerington Central)**  
Jayden Thomas, 6-2, 188, Atlanta (Pace Academy)  
Dont'e Thornton Jr., 6-4, 180, Baltimore (Mount St. Joseph)

## Tight End

**Cane Berrong, 6-4, 225, Hartwell, Ga. (Hart County)**  
Sam Hart, 6-5, 220, Aurora, Colo. (Cherokee Trail)

## Offensive Line

Tommy Brockermeyer, 6-6, 270, Fort Worth, Texas (All Saints Episcopal)  
**Greg Crippen, 6-4, 270, Bradenton, Fla. (IMG Academy)**  
Garrett Dellinger, 6-6, 265, Clarkston, Mich. (Clarkston)  
Reuben Fatheree, 6-8, 275, Richmond, Texas (Foster)  
**Blake Fisher, 6-6, 330, Avon, Ind. (Avon)**  
Donovan Jackson, 6-4, 295, Houston (Episcopal)  
Wyatt Milum, 6-6, 250, Huntington, W.Va. (Spring Valley)  
Nolan Rucci, 6-8, 271, Lititz, Pa. (Warwick)  
Rocco Spindler, 6-5, 290, Clarkston, Mich. (Clarkston)  
Landon Tengwall, 6-6, 315, Olney, Md. (Good Counsel)  
Trey Zuhn, 6-7, 276, Fort Collins, Colo. (Fossil Ridge)

## Defensive End

Brock Bowers, 6-4, 220, Napa, Calif. (Napa)  
Zavier Carter, 6-5, 193, Atlanta (Hapeville Charter)  
Cade Denhoff, 6-5, 225, Lakeland, Fla. (Lakeland Christian)  
Korey Foreman, 6-5, 263, Corona, Calif. (Centennial)  
Monkell Goodwine, 6-4, 264, Fort Washington, Md. (National Christian Academy)  
Landon Jackson, 6-5, 195, Texarkana, Texas (Pleasant Grove)  
Keanu Koht, 6-5, 225, Vero Beach, Fla. (Vero Beach)  
JC Latham, 6-6, 272, Bradenton, Fla. (IMG Academy)  
George Rooks, 6-5, 250, Jersey City, N.J. (St. Peter's Prep)  
Najee Story, 6-3, 230, Solon, Ohio (Solon)  
J.T. Tuimoloau, 6-4, 275, Bellevue, Wash. (Eastside Catholic)  
Keanu Williams, 6-5, 250, Clovis, Calif. (Clovis)

## Defensive Tackle

Elliot Donald, 6-3, 255, Pittsburgh (Central Catholic)  
Tywone Malone, 6-4, 290, Oradell, N.J. (Bergen Catholic)

Damon Payne, 6-4, 295, Belleville, Mich. (Belleville)  
**Gabriel Rubio, 6-5, 280, St. Peters, Mo. (Lutheran of St. Charles)**

## Linebacker

Barrett Carter, 6-1, 205, Suwanee, Ga. (North Gwinnett)  
Chaz Chambliss, 6-3, 225, Carrollton, Ga. (Carrollton)  
Branden Jennings, 6-3, 225, Jacksonville, Fla. (Sandalwood)  
Yanni Karlaftis, 6-3, 205, West Lafayette, Ind. (West Lafayette)  
Jeremiah Williams, 6-4, 215, Birmingham, Ala. (Ramsay)

## Cornerback

Daylan Carnell, 6-1, 185, Indianapolis (Ben Davis)  
Corey Collier, 6-2, 180, Miami (Miami Palmetto)  
Tony Grimes, 6-1, 180, Virginia Beach, Va. (Princess Anne)  
Jakailin Johnson, 6-1, 170, St. Louis (De Smet Jesuit)  
Dyson McCutcheon, 5-10, 160, La Puente, Calif. (Bishop Amat)

## Safety

JD Coffey, 6-0, 175, Kennedale, Texas (Kennedale)  
Derrick Davis, 6-0, 193, Monroeville, Pa. (Gateway)  
AJ Kirk Jr., 6-1, 197, Dublin, Ohio (Coffman)  
Bryce Steele, 6-1, 195, Alexandria, Va. (Episcopal)  
Andre Turrentine, 6-0, 180, Nashville, Tenn. (Ensworth)  
Justin Walters, 6-1, 170, Bolingbrook, Ill. (Bolingbrook)  
Hunter Wohler, 6-2, 188, Muskego, Wis. (Muskego)

## Athlete

Lovasea Carroll, 6-1, 190, Bradenton, Fla. (IMG Academy)  
Walter Clayton, 6-3, 185, Lake Wales, Fla. (Lake Wales)  
TreVeyon Henderson, 5-11, 185, Hopewell, Va. (Hopewell)  
Jamareeh Jones, 6-1, 190, Highland Springs, Va. (Highland Springs)  
Devin Kirkwood, 6-4, 175, Gardena, Calif. (Serra)\*  
Ga'Quincy McKinstry, 6-1, 175, Pinson, Ala. (Pinson Valley)  
Ceyair Wright, 6-0, 173, Los Angeles (Loyola)

Commitments in **bold italics**

\* Earned an offer from Notre Dame between Nov. 22 and Nov. 26



Indianapolis Ben Davis 2021 standout Daylan Carnell, the nation's No. 19 cornerback and No. 231 prospect per Rivals, has been a target for Notre Dame for several months.

PHOTO COURTESY RIVALS.COM

## 2021 Master List Changes

Prospects Removed: None.

## RIVALS 2021 TEAM RECRUITING RANKINGS

As of Nov. 27

Rk.	School	Commits	Rk.	School	Commits
1.	<b>Notre Dame</b>	7	6.	Clemson	5
2.	Ohio State	6	7.	Iowa	5
3.	Texas	7	8.	USC	4
4.	Miami	9	9.	Oklahoma	3
5.	Florida	7	10.	Wisconsin	5

BY TODD D. BURLAGE

**M**ike Brey has never been shy about telling his players not to be shy.

The Irish head basketball coach is more likely to pull a player from a game for turning down an open shot than he would be yanking a guy for missing a few in a row. Notre Dame's 64-62 overtime win against Toledo Nov. 21 served as a prime example.

Irish forward Nate Laszewski had missed 19 of his 22 three-point shots through his first six games this season. So what did Brey do?

He drew up an out-of-bounds play for Laszewski with only 1.5 seconds remaining in regulation and his Irish trailing by three points.

"When we came out of the timeout, Coach Brey subbed me in," recounted Laszewski, a 6-9, 225-pound sophomore out of Jupiter, Fla. "It's a misdirection play and Coach Brey told me if I found my look to take it."

Laszewski found the look, took the shot, hit nothing but net, tied the game and set up an overtime victory for the Irish. The win was part of a perfect 6-0 home stand.

"He was due, wasn't he?" Brey chuckled rhetorically after the game.

Remarkably, Notre Dame recorded its 13th win in an overtime game in its last 16 tries.

With ACC play fast approaching,

#### IRISH ROLL IN TUNE-UP GAME

Paced by 16 points off the bench from sophomore forward Nate Laszewski, six Notre Dame players scored in double figures in a 91-66 victory over Fairleigh Dickinson Nov. 26, a win that moved the Irish winning streak to six games, all of which came during a home stand that followed a season-opening road loss to ACC rival North Carolina.

The Fighting Irish bench provided 38 points in the game, and senior forwards John Mooney (13 points and 13 rebounds) and Juwan Durham (12 points and 11 rebounds) both recorded double-doubles.

Notre Dame made eight of its first 14 shots against Fairleigh Dickinson, while the Knights missed their first 18 field goal tries, which led to a 13-0 Irish lead. Notre Dame was never seriously threatened the rest of the way.

In a balanced effort on both sides of the court, the Irish had 24 assists on its 32 baskets and outrebounded FDU 44-23.

— Todd D. Burlage



Laszewski struggled from long range early in the season, but hit a buzzer-beating three-pointer to send the game against Toledo Nov. 21 into overtime, where the Irish prevailed 64-62.

PHOTO BY COREY BODDEN

# Just Following Orders

**Despite a sluggish start shooting, sophomore forward Nate Laszewski has been told to keep firing away**

Brey is going to need more of the same out of Laszewski — and essentially all of his other shooters — because the long-range shots have yet to fall with any frequency or consistency this season.

But even through Laszewski's sluggish shooting start, Brey still sees a much improved player from a year ago.

"I thought he was doing other

stuff," Brey said of Laszewski, who has increased his rebounding from 3.9 per game in 19.0 minutes per outing as a freshman last year to 6.2 per game in 21.0 minutes of action so far this season.

Laszewski made just 2 of 7 three-point shots against Toledo, including the one that sent the game to overtime and set up the Irish comeback win, which might provide some-



thing to build on for the team and the player.

"All my coaches, all my teammates tell me," said Laszewski, who scored a team-high 16 points five nights later in a 91-66 win over Fairleigh Dickinson. "If I have great looks, just keep shooting it and it will fall."

Brey insists that the field goal percentages will eventually even out for Laszewski — arguably the purest shooter on the Irish — and the shots will start connecting.

In the meantime, the coach wants his versatile forward to keep firing and keep working.

"He's rebounding, and he's defending," Brey said. "He's a more-ready college player this year."

### BUILDING ON TRADITION

Notre Dame is continuing to be strong in three important areas of focus — sharing and protecting the ball, and defending without fouling.

Through their first six games, the Irish ranked first among the 15 ACC teams in turnover margin at plus-6.62 and were second in the league in assist/turnover ratio at 1.63.

These numbers improved in game seven versus Fairleigh Dickinson Nov. 26, when the Irish combined for 24 assists (on 32 baskets) with only seven turnovers.

"That's how we play," Brey said. "I



Fifth-year senior Rex Pflueger tallied 10 points, seven rebounds and five assists in Notre Dame's 91-66 win over Fairleigh Dickinson Nov. 26.

PHOTO BY COREY BODDEN

## Three-Point Play

### 1. Good As Glue

Notre Dame fifth-year senior guard Rex Pflueger has never been one to stuff the stat sheet. Pflueger's value, instead, comes through versatility, and often, in his instinctual and clutch plays that don't always show up in a box score.

As Pflueger continues to gain stamina and confidence after reconstructive knee surgery last December, his production is climbing as well. In a 91-66 win over Fairleigh Dickinson Nov. 26, this Irish team captain recorded 10 points, seven rebounds and five assists.

"I was in my game doing a little bit of everything," Pflueger said afterward. "My knee is getting progressively healthier as the games go on, and I'm learning how to use my body again."

### 2. Finding Their Target

Through its first six games this season, an Irish team supposedly built on its sharp-shooting ranked 13th out of the 15 ACC teams in three-pointers made at 29.0 percent. That effort ranked 288th nationally among 350 Division I teams.

Notre Dame looked more itself against Fairleigh Dickinson — which won an NCAA Tournament game last year — going 12 of 25 (48.0 percent) from three-point range in a 25-point win.

"We threw a couple of shots in. It's good to see us make some good ones," Notre Dame head coach Mike Brey said afterward.

### 3. Join The Club

With his five assists against Fairleigh Dickinson, Irish senior guard T.J. Gibbs eclipsed the 300-assist mark for his career, becoming the 13th Notre Dame player to reach that milestone in the 20 years Brey has coached here.

With 303 assists for his career, Gibbs ranks 21st all time at Notre Dame.

— Todd D. Burlage

look at assist-to-turnover in the team column throughout the game. Are we taking care of the ball and are we sharing it? It's something we really hang our hat on."

The three starting Irish guards — sophomore Prentiss Hubb, along with seniors Rex Pflueger and T.J. Gibbs — all individually rank in the ACC's top 10 in assist/turnover ratio.

Notre Dame also entered its week-long Thanksgiving break ranked third in the country in fewest personal fouls committed per game (11.8).

In the last decade, the Irish have finished outside of the nation's top 10 in this category only twice and led the country three times (2011-12, 2015-16 and 2018-19). ♦

## 2019-20 NOTRE DAME MEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent (TV)	Result/Time (ET)
Nov. 6	at North Carolina*	L, 76-65
Nov. 9	Robert Morris^	W, 92-57
Nov. 12	Howard^	W, 79-50
Nov. 15	Marshall^	W, 74-64
Nov. 18	Presbyterian	W, 63-53
Nov. 21	Toledo^	W, 64-62 (OT)
Nov. 26	Fairleigh Dickinson	W, 91-66
Dec. 4	at Maryland# (ESPN/2)	7:15 p.m.
Dec. 7	Boston College* (ESPN2/U)	7 p.m.
Dec. 10	Detroit Mercy	7 p.m.
Dec. 14	UCLA	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	vs. Indiana&	2 p.m.
Dec. 29	Alabama A&M	7 p.m.
Jan. 4	at Syracuse* (ESPN2/U)	4 p.m.
Jan. 8	at NC State* (ESPN2/U)	7 p.m.
Jan. 11	Louisville* (ESPN)	2 p.m.
Jan. 15	at Georgia Tech* (ACCN)	8:30 p.m.
Jan. 22	Syracuse* (ESPN/2/U)	7 p.m.
Jan. 25	at Florida State* (TBA)	12 p.m.
Jan. 29	Wake Forest* (ACCN)	9 p.m.
Feb. 1	Georgia Tech* (RSN)	12 p.m.
Feb. 5	Pittsburgh* (ACCN)	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 9	at Clemson* (ACCN)	6 p.m.
Feb. 11	at Virginia* (ESPN2/U)	9 p.m.
Feb. 15	at Duke* (TBA)	4 p.m.
Feb. 17	North Carolina* (ESPN)	7 p.m.
Feb. 23	Miami* (ACCN)	6 p.m.
Feb. 26	at Boston College* (ACCN)	9 p.m.
Feb. 29	at Wake Forest* (RSN)	4 p.m.
Mar. 4	Florida State* (ESPN2/U)	9 p.m.
Mar. 7	Virginia Tech* (ACCN)	TBA
Mar. 10-14	ACC Tournament\$ (ACCN/ESPN)	TBA

\* ACC game; ^ Men Against Breast Cancer Invitational; # ACC/Big Ten Challenge; & Crossroads Classic at Indianapolis; \$ at Greensboro, N.C.; ACCN — ACC Network

# THE OLD GUARDS

**Graduate transfers Destinee Walker and Marta Snizek are helping allay pressure during Notre Dame's youth movement**

BY LOU SOMOGYI

**T**he date Nov. 11 was the official Veteran's Day this year for former military members of the United States.

For Notre Dame head coach Muffet McGraw and the 2019-20 Fighting Irish, a different form of veteran's day took place Nov. 23 when it heavily leaned on fifth-year senior and graduate transfer guards Destinee Walker (from North Carolina) and Marta Snizek (from Stanford) in their 76-72 upset of No. 21-ranked Michigan in Ann Arbor.

A former Pac-12 All-Defensive honorable mention selection, Snizek was recruited to distribute on offense and apply fierce pressure up top on defense. Versus the Wolverines, she handed out five assists to go with five steals, and ratcheted it up in the fourth quarter when Michigan connected on just 2 of 13 shots from the field and had seven turnovers.

"You expect that your veterans are going to step up because they've been there," McGraw said. "Marta played with such grit. She was everywhere. She got rebounds at crucial times, she got some big steals and she drove the ball. She really made a lot of things happen for us.

"I was really pleased with her leadership, which continues to evolve and just get better every day."

Meanwhile, on offense Walker detonated with 27 points on 9-of-14 shooting from the field, notably 5 of 8 from three-point range where the Fighting Irish had been severely and uncharacteristically lacking early in the season.

A 2015 McDonald's All-American who was ranked No. 17 nationally in her class by ESPN HoopGurlz and was a member of the USA U18 National Team, Walker made the All-ACC Freshman team in 2016 while averaging 13.9 points per game. In-



**Walker scored a season-high 27 points and equaled a career best with five three-pointers to help Notre Dame rally past Michigan 76-72 Nov. 23.**

PHOTO BY MIKE MILLER

juries then began to derail her career at the tail end of her sophomore year, and truncated each of her past two seasons.

For most of the first five games this season, she attempted to get her basketball rhythm back, and in the 72-69 defeat to Michigan State Nov. 14 reached her nadir on the floor when in 32 minutes she was 0 of 2 from the field, had two rebounds, one assist and fouled out.

"At the beginning of the year I was putting a lot of pressure on myself, coming back from the injury and not playing for a while," Walker said. "I started to overthink a lot. Before the Michigan game, I tried to make an ef-

fort to just play my hardest. ... I just tried to show my leadership presence the whole game. I felt some comfort going into it.

"I try to give each of my teammates confidence going in, not to be nervous, that we're a great team and that if we figure things out we can win. I feel like sometimes I start off hot, and then I kind of drag out. Against Michigan, I was fortunate enough to make it all the way through the game.

"We're a new team, but we have a lot of chemistry already."

The nucleus of the team in coming years will feature freshmen Sam Brunelle and Anaya Peoples at forward and guard, respectively, while sophomore wing Katlyn Gilbert also has three seasons of eligibility after this one because of medically red-shirting last season.

All were McDonald's All-Americans like Walker, but now with Snizek and Walker emerging more to take the load off them, the overall squad has a better opportunity to grow and thrive.

"The best thing about the Michigan game was Destinee had 27 points, and it gives both freshmen a little bit of a sigh of relief of you don't have to carry the whole load," McGraw said. "We have other people that are going to do it."

Brunelle entered the fourth quarter of the Michigan game with only three points, but with the Wolverines concentrating on Walker, she tallied nine points in the closing minutes, highlighted by a back-breaking three.

"She comes out of the game thinking, 'I want to play better, I want to help the team more, but at the same time I don't have that pressure on me,'" McGraw said of lessening the burden on the prized freshmen. "The biggest thing it gives us is the knowledge that we can beat these teams. It gives us a lot of hope and definitely a confidence.





Sniezek's play as a distributor (five assists) and a defender (five steals) were crucial in helping the Fighting Irish knock off the Wolverines.

PHOTO BY MIKE MILLER

"It changes your perspective going into the game that you know you can do it — because you've done it."

McGraw didn't expect this team to begin jelling until January, but she is starting to believe it has a chance to be ahead of schedule.

Instant veteran help can do that for you. ♦

## 2019-20 NOTRE DAME WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent (TV)	Result/Time (ET)
Nov. 5	at Fordham	W, 60-55
Nov. 8	Loyola Maryland	W, 84-60
Nov. 11	Tennessee	L, 74-63
Nov. 14	Michigan State	L, 72-69
Nov. 20	Toledo	W, 54-51
Nov. 23	at Michigan	W, 76-72
Nov. 28	vs. Florida Gulf Coast <sup>^</sup>	L, 69-60
Nov. 29	vs. South Dakota State <sup>^</sup>	L, 65-59
Nov. 30	vs. South Florida <sup>^</sup>	W, 67-51
Dec. 4	Minnesota (ACCN)	8 p.m.
Dec. 8	at Connecticut (ESPN)	4 p.m.
Dec. 11	DePaul (ACCN)	6:30 p.m.
Dec. 21	Guelph <sup>&amp;</sup>	1 p.m.
Dec. 29	Clemson* (RSN)	4 p.m.
Jan. 2	at Pittsburgh* (ACCNE)	7 p.m.
Jan. 5	at Syracuse* (ACCN)	4 p.m.
Jan. 9	Boston College* (ACCNE)	7 p.m.
Jan. 12	NC State* (ACCN)	4 p.m.
Jan. 16	at Duke* (ACCN)	8 p.m.
Jan. 19	Miami* (ESPN2/ACCN)	1 p.m.
Jan. 26	at Virginia* (ACCNE)	12:30 p.m.
Jan. 30	Louisville* (ESPN/2)	7 p.m.
Feb. 2	at Georgia Tech* (ACCN)	2 p.m.
Feb. 6	at Wake Forest* (ACCNE)	7 p.m.
Feb. 9	Pittsburgh* (ACCN)	4 p.m.
Feb. 13	at Boston College* (ACCNE)	7 p.m.
Feb. 16	at Louisville* (ACCN)	3 p.m.
Feb. 20	Virginia Tech* (RSN)	8 p.m.
Feb. 23	Syracuse* (ACCN)	12 p.m.
Feb. 27	North Carolina* (ACCNE)	7 p.m.
Mar. 1	at Florida State* (ESPN2/ACCN)	2 p.m.
Mar. 4-8	ACC Tournament <sup>\$</sup> (ACCN)	TBA

<sup>^</sup> Cancun Challenge at Hard Rock Hotel Riviera Maya in Cancun, Mexico; & Exhibition; % ACC/Big Ten Challenge; \* ACC game; % at Greensboro, N.C.; ACCN — ACC Network; BTN — Big Ten Network; RSN — Regional Sports Networks; ACCNE — ACC Network Extra

## Three-Point Play

### 1. Instant Spark

Sometimes the five best players don't necessarily have to start. In an effort to generate some energy off the bench, head coach Muffet McGraw decided to start 6-4 sophomore Danielle Cosgrove at Michigan Nov. 23 so that highly intense freshman guard Anaya Peoples could study the action early. It worked, with Peoples still playing nearly 30 minutes and providing 13 points, five rebounds, two steals and a block.

"We actually talked early in the season of bringing her off the bench because she just gives us such a lift in every direction, offensively and defensively," McGraw said.

With Cosgrove in the lineup at the outset, McGraw believes it also might help prevent 6-2 freshman forward Sam Brunelle from getting into early foul trouble when she has to guard the middle in the zone defense.

Once 6-3 starting forward Mikayla Vaughn returns from her sprained knee injury, the strategy could reap even more benefits.

### 2. Injury Report

Vaughn, who suffered her knee sprain in the season opener at Fordham Nov. 5, is projected to return around final exams week in mid-December, and McGraw said she would not play Vaughn in the Dec. 21 exhibition match versus Guelph.

The goal is to have her in the best possible condition for the league opener at home versus Clemson Dec. 29. There also would be 18 days between the Dec. 11 DePaul game — the final non-conference contest — before facing the Tigers.

Meanwhile, sophomore guard Abby Prohaska has begun shooting in practice, but is not yet permitted to run after her pulmonary embolism diagnosis in October. While it's not ruled out that she might be cleared to do some practice work by January, McGraw anticipates that a medical redshirt is probable.

### 3. Balancing Act

Including the Cancun Challenge from Nov. 28-30, the scoring distribution through nine games had the balance the staff expected.

Sophomore guard Katlyn Gilbert was the top scorer with 14.9 points per game followed by Peoples (14.0), graduate student guard Destinee Walker (13.7) and freshman forward Sam Brunelle (13.3). Brunelle and Peoples were the top rebounders at 6.7 and 6.6 per game, respectively.

Prior to the Cancun Challenge Notre Dame ranked No. 323 out of 348 Division I teams in rebounding margin and 331st in three-point field goals made per contest (3.3). Against South Dakota State the Irish were out-rebounded 53-25 and 1 of 17 beyond the arc.

— Lou Somogyi

## Notre Dame Finishes 1-2 At Cancun Challenge

During Notre Dame's three games in three days (Nov. 28-30) Thanksgiving outing at the Cancun Challenge in Mexico, it showed all the earmarks of an inexperienced team — yet one with a high ceiling.

The Irish opened with 69-60 and 65-59 losses to Florida Gulf Coast and South Dakota State, respectively, falling behind by 16 points in the second half of both games before making late rallies. They then closed with an impressive 67-51 victory versus No. 21 South Florida to get back above .500 at 5-4. Freshman guard Anaya Peoples was a standout for the Irish in all three games while leading the team in scoring with 52 points (17.3 per game) and in rebounds with 26 (8.7 per game).

Both Florida Gulf Coast and South Dakota State are perennial NCAA Tournament teams, with FGC joining Notre Dame, Connecticut and Baylor as the lone four Division I programs to post at least 25 wins every season since 2010-11.

Versus USF, head coach Muffet McGraw had Peoples come off the bench to provide an instant spark, which she did with 19 points and nine rebounds. Graduate student Destinee Walker added 17 points, while sophomore guard Katlyn Gilbert — who has tallied double-figure scoring in each of the first nine games — had 11 points to go with eight rebounds, and freshman forward Sam Brunelle contributed 10 points. Graduate student point guard Marta Sniezek unofficially took eight charges in the last two games, and added six points, six rebounds and five assists in the victory against the Bulls.

— Lou Somogyi

# Cross Country Squads Score Big At NCAA Championships

BY TODD D. BURLAGE

Notre Dame director of track and field and cross country Matt Sparks admits to becoming more satisfied each time he takes another look at the final results from the 2019 NCAA Championships held Nov. 23 in Terre Haute, Ind.

The Irish men entered the meet ranked No. 12 and finished eighth, their best national result since a third-place showing in 2005. The Irish women were ranked No. 19 and finished 15th.

"Really a good step in the right direction," Sparks said. "We exceeded expectations!"

Arkansas won the women's 6K championship, while BYU won the men's 10K race, dethroning three-time defending champion Northern Arizona.

With a 17th-place individual finish for Notre Dame, graduate student Anna Rohrer capped off her amazing collegiate career by leading the Irish women while also becoming the first four-time All-American in Notre Dame cross country history.

A refreshing blend of talent and humility, Rohrer narrowly missed becoming the nation's first women's cross country runner since 1999 to finish in the top 10 of the NCAA Championships in all four competitive seasons.

"I've had quite a few ups and downs over the past four and a half years," Rohrer said of an amazing career that was sometimes sidetracked by injuries. "But looking back on it, I can see how all of these experiences have really shaped me."

"I'm really just thankful for all the well-rounded experiences that I have had, all the opportunities that Notre Dame provides."

Following the race, Sparks was left only to marvel, appreciate and celebrate the success that Rohrer enjoyed at Notre Dame, along with the com-



Anna Rohrer became the first four-time All-American in Notre Dame cross country history with her 17th-place finish at the NCAA Championships Nov. 23.

PHOTO COURTESY FIGHTING IRISH MEDIA

mitment and legacy she brought to his program.

"Whatever Anna had in the tank is what we saw in practice and competitions," Sparks said. "There is nobody like Anna that came every day with their best effort that I've ever coached."

Plagued by nagging injuries throughout her college career — severe enough to keep Rohrer off the course her entire junior season — this legendary Irish athlete gradually realized that slowing down might speed her up.

"It has always been a challenge to get Anna *not* to train," Sparks explained. "She finally began to understand that sometimes we'll be better off in the long run by taking a down day."

Enduring a light to steady rain at Terre Haute, with temperatures in the mid-30s and wind-chill values dropping

into the 20s, Sparks said portions of the championship course included ankle-deep mud — a setting that can bring out the best, and sometimes the worst, in competitors.

"About as tough as you can get," Sparks said. "But that's what cross country is about. Everybody is running in the same conditions. You can't use that as an excuse for not performing, and we fought through it."

Following Rohrer in the women's race among Irish scorers was sophomore Maddy Denner, who finished 81st.

On the men's side, Notre Dame sophomore Dylan Jacobs earned All-America honors with his 29th-place finish. Junior Yared Nuguse finished 47th in a satisfying eighth-place team effort.

"Our men ran great today," Irish men's cross country coach Sean Carlson said. "Everyone we put on the line did his job and, most importantly, ran as a team."

The Irish men finished 14th in last year's championships, while the women were eighth. ♦

## Irish Roundup

### HOCKEY (8-2-2 OVERALL, 4-2-2 BIG TEN)

No. 5 Notre Dame lost its first series of the year at Michigan State Nov. 22-23. The two teams skated to a 1-1 overtime tie in the opener after Notre Dame evened it with 1:39 remaining in regulation. The following evening, the Spartans edged the Irish 3-2 when they found the back of the net with just 1:10 left to go in the contest.

The Irish returned to action with a two-game home series versus Bowling Green Nov. 29-30.

### WOMEN'S SOCCER (11-8-2 OVERALL, 4-4-2 ACC)

The Irish were eliminated from the NCAA Championship with a 1-0 setback at No. 2-seeded South Carolina in the second round Nov. 22. The Gamecocks scored a goal with 4:52 to go the first half and held off the Irish in the second stanza.

### MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING

Notre Dame posted a second-place finish out of five teams at the Ohio State Invitational Nov. 21-23 in Columbus, Ohio. The Irish totaled 2,346 points, trailing only host Ohio State's 2,436.5.

The Irish are off until they host Northwestern Jan. 17.

### WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING

The Irish came in third out of eight squads at the Ohio State Invitational Nov. 21-23 in Columbus, Ohio. Notre Dame compiled 1,790.5 points, behind only Kentucky's 2,346.5 and host Ohio State's 2,518.5.

Notre Dame will get back into the pool Jan. 11 with a tri-meet versus Iowa and Illinois at Iowa City, Iowa.

### VOLLEYBALL (18-9 OVERALL, 11-6 ACC)

Notre Dame dropped a pair of road matches, falling 3-0 at Louisville Nov. 22 and 3-2 at Georgia Tech Nov. 24.

The Irish conclude the regular season with a home contest versus Duke Nov. 29.

— Steve Downey



# J.J. Jansen: The \$10-Million Long Snapper

BY ANDREW MENTOCK

**A**fter graduating from Notre Dame and going undrafted in 2008, long snapper J.J. Jansen was signed by the Green Bay Packers. However, he suffered a knee injury early in the year and spent the rest of the season on injured reserve.

His assumption was that the injury would spark the end of his football career. Jansen's mother agreed.

"I got hurt my first year in Green Bay and a few days later my mom said, 'Would this not be a good time for you to go get your CPA?'" Jansen said. "I was an accounting major, and I thought, 'All right, I kind of had my fun, I had my shot, and now I need to move on.' I had zero expectations.

"I thought it was really cool that I got invited to an NFL camp. I had no sense of what the league thought of me. I had no sense of my talent level."

To his surprise, the Packers traded him to the Panthers for a seventh-round pick before the following season and the rest is history. A little more than a decade later, Jansen is still playing in the NFL with Carolina.

By the end of this season, he will have made \$10,222,500 over his career and has more than \$1 million left on his contract through the 2020 season. Jansen is the fourth-most tenured long snapper currently in the NFL with 12 years of experience (Don Muhlbach of the Detroit Lions leads this category).

Jansen said his technique and thriving under pressure are important to his success as a long snapper, but he also noted the importance of having a selfless attitude.

"I always take my job very seriously, and I think everybody does," he said. "But I think having an early appreciation for what the job requirements were — it's not about me.



**Jansen, who has been with the Carolina Panthers since 2009, is the fourth-most tenured long snapper in the NFL with 12 years of experience.**

PHOTO COURTESY CAROLINA PANTHERS

"It's what does the punter want? What does the kicker want? How can I put them in the best positions to be successful?"

His NFL maturation process began while he was at Notre Dame. Then Fighting Irish head coach Charlie Weis may have had his struggles on the field, but after coming from the New England Patriots he had NFL-like expectations for his players and this paid off for Jansen.

At the time, his special teams coach was Brian Polian, who currently holds the same role with Notre Dame under Irish head coach Brian Kelly. Like Weis, he also brought a wealth of NFL knowledge.

"Coach Polian had his connections through his dad with the Colts

and the Bills going back to previous years," Jansen said. "You had a really good sense of what the NFL would be like, both on the field and off.

"I didn't always feel it, but I think when you compare stories with other guys I was more prepared for the NFL than I think the typical player, and that was the advantage of playing for coaches who had a lot of experience, took their jobs really seriously."

Jansen also benefited from having to learn how to snap and protect when his team was punting, which is necessary for the NFL because only the left and right gunners are allowed to pass the line of scrimmage and run down the field before the ball is actually kicked.

He said this was once how it was in college, but a rule change made it so all 11 players could take off as soon as the ball was snapped and thus punt formations and the responsibility of a longer snapper have changed. If you watch the Irish today, you'll see current long snapper John Shannon take off as soon as he snaps the ball.

"It helped me immensely to be sort of in the old-school punt formations because that's the way the NFL is," Jansen said. "The rules haven't changed in the NFL the way they have in college."

While he has found his career as an NFL long snapper rewarding, the job still comes with its challenges.

One of the more difficult aspects of having a long NFL career as a long snapper is that people tend to notice him only when he has made a mistake. He could make 500 perfect snaps in a row, but people are only going to reference the one that went over the punter's head.

"The fact that as a long snapper you're relatively anonymous, you take pride in the fact that you become anonymous," Jansen said. "It's the same way that other players maybe take pride when they become recognized. It's just a retraining of a professional value system. It's not always easy — far from it — especially when times are tough.

"You can't help but think, 'Man, nobody even knows who I am. I'm doing well but everyone's quick to say negative things.'" ♦

## NOTRE DAME IN THE NFL: WEEK 12 HIGHLIGHTS

• **Will Fuller (Played at Notre Dame from 2013-15), WR, Houston Texans:** Notched seven catches for 140 yards in the 7-4 Texans' 20-17 win over the 6-5 Indianapolis Colts ... Has 41 receptions for 590 yards and three touchdowns in seven games played.

• **Julian Love (2015-18), CB, New York Giants:** Recorded one tackle and his first career interception, which he returned 30 yards, in the 2-9 Giants' 19-14 loss to the 5-6 Chicago Bears ... Has three tackles on the season.

• **Romeo Okwara (2012-15), DE, Detroit Lions:** Had five tackles (all solo) in the 3-7-1 Lions' 19-16 road loss to the 2-9 Washington Redskins ... For the season, he has 17 tackles, half a sack and one forced fumble.



The 1919 Fighting Irish were recognized by both the National Championship Foundation and Parke H. Davis as the best football team in the land, thanks in great part to crucial road victories over Nebraska (14-9) and Army (12-9).

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME ARCHIVES

# THE FORGOTTEN CHAMPIONS

## Notre Dame won its first NCAA-recognized national title 100 years ago

BY LOU SOMOGYI

**T**he 1909 Notre Dame football season is remembered for pulling the first major upset in school history, an 11-3 victory at "Champions of the West" Michigan.

Four years later in 1913, the small Catholic school in northern Indiana stole headlines in New York with its epic 35-13 shocker of eastern superpower Army while unveiling a passing attack seldom witnessed in the game.

In 1920, a second straight 9-0 season by Notre Dame became even more heralded when its first Walter Camp first-team All-American, halfback George Gipp, was immortalized in American sports lore with his death less than one month after the season's conclusion.

And in 1924, head coach Knute Rockne's charges captured what is

recognized by the university as its initial consensus national title in football.

Consensus, yes. Initial, no.

Among all the aforementioned watershed moments over a span of 15 years, the 1919 season has become maybe the most obscured team in the program's annals.

While Harvard University with its 9-0-1 finish was declared the "unanimous" champion that season by various outlets, the NCAA also honored Notre Dame, Illinois and Texas A&M as a bona fide national champion (see College Football Data Warehouse and [NCAA.com/history/football/fbs](http://NCAA.com/history/football/fbs)), which it would not in 1920.

Under second-year head coach Rockne and the peerless Gipp, Notre Dame was recognized in 1919 by both the National Championship Foundation and Parke H. Davis as the best football team in the land, thanks in great part to crucial road victories

over its top nemesis Nebraska (14-9) and the always-respected Army Cadets (12-9).

Eventually in 1936, the formation of the Associated Press poll became the most recognized and agreed outlet to judge when it came to national titles. As the years progressed, three other outlets became recognized by the NCAA: first the coaches poll (known initially as the United Press, and now Amway) in 1950, the Football Writers Association of America (Grantland Rice Award) in 1954, and the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame in 1959 with the awarding of the MacArthur Bowl.

The latter was presented to Notre Dame in 1964 under first-year head coach Ara Parseghian, while the AP and UPI recognized Alabama as No. 1 in the regular season (although it would lose in the Orange Bowl), and Arkansas earned it from the FWAA.

The University of Notre Dame recognizes 11 consensus national titles — 1924, 1929, 1930, 1943, 1946, 1947, 1949, 1966, 1973, 1977 and 1988 — but the 1919 and 1964 editions also are acknowledged by the NCAA.

### QUITE THE PERSONNEL

There might not be a centennial celebration of the first of 13 recognized national titles in the 70-season span from 1919-88, but looking back on the personnel from that 1919 team, it's understandable why it was so esteemed, even beyond football.

Of course, Gipp was the linchpin of a roster replete with future College Football Hall of Fame talent. As a junior, he rushed for 729 yards and 6.9 yards per carry, completed 41 of 72 passes (56.9 percent) for 727 yards, intercepted three passes on defense, and handled kicking and punting duties.

- Tackle Bernie Kirk was Gipp's best friend and a fellow Michigan native. After making the "All-Western" team for Notre Dame in 1919, he transferred to Michigan and would earn higher esteem. Alas, like Gipp, he died far too young, in 1922 from injuries in an automobile accident.

- Guards Heartley "Hunk" Anderson and Maurice "Clipper" Smith are both enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame.

Anderson made the 1920s NFL All-Decade team with the Chicago Bears, succeeded Rockne as Notre Dame's head coach in 1931 and won the NFL



title in 1943 as the coach of the Bears — defeating 1919 teammate and Washington Redskins head coach



**George Gipp did it all for the Irish in 1919, rushing for 729 yards and 6.9 yards per carry, completing 41 of 72 passes (56.9 percent) for 727 yards, intercepting three passes on defense, and handling kicking and punting duties.**

PHOTO COURTESY NOTRE DAME MEDIA RELATIONS

Alfred “Dutch” Bergman (the starting right halfback opposite Gipp) in the title game. Bergman also won the 1936 Orange Bowl at Catholic University, defeating Ole Miss.

- Center George Trafton joined Anderson on the 1920s NFL All-Decade team and later was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

- All-American right end Eddie Anderson was enshrined into the College Football Hall of Fame after winning 201 games as a college head coach — and also was a doctor.

- Left tackle Frank Coughlin played in the NFL — as did quarterback and team captain Leonard Bahan — and later served as assistant Attorney General of Indiana.

- Tackle Lawrence “Buck” Shaw was the head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles when they defeated Vince Lombardi’s impending future dynasty at Green Bay to capture the 1960 NFL championship.

- Center Edward “Slip” Madigan was a college head coach 21 years and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1974.

- End Roger Kiley, who replaced Kirk in 1920, was appointed by President John F. Kennedy as United States Circuit Court Judge in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh District in 1961.

Such talent alone merits recognition and awe even a century later. ♦

## Notre Dame’s Greatest Opening Play

On the 125th anniversary of Notre Dame football in 2012, *Blue & Gold Illustrated* did a top 50 countdown of the most famous/crucial plays in its history.

Coming in at No. 47 was “The Greatest Opening Play” at Nebraska on Oct. 18, 1919.

There have been a handful of occasions where Notre Dame returned the opening kickoff for a touchdown, but none as vital than on that day.

Second-year head coach Knute Rockne was 3-1-2 in his first season at Notre Dame in 1918 (a national crisis with the Spanish Influenza cancelled the October portion of the schedule), concluding with a scoreless tie at Nebraska.

The Cornhuskers had become quite the nemesis, handing Notre Dame and head coach Jesse Harper their lone defeats in 1915 (20-19) and 1917 (7-0). All the games between the two teams from 1915-20 were played in Lincoln, Neb., because the larger and more accommodating facilities there made for a more profitable payday.

In 1919, Notre Dame opened with tune-ups against Kalamazoo and Mount Union at home, which drew only 5,000 and 4,000 fans (the game at Nebraska would have 10,000). Rockne wasn’t even at the Kalamazoo game because he was busy scouting the Huskers, who would also topple his Irish in 1922 and 1923. But on this day in 1919, the 31-year-old head coach couldn’t ask for a better start to a game.

On Nebraska’s opening kickoff, junior star George Gipp fielded the ball, and immediately drew the attention of the coverage team. As he veered to his right, Gipp passed a lateral to Alfred “Dutch” Bergman, who raced for a 97-yard touchdown after future Irish head coach Hunk Anderson removed the final would-be tackler. Although Nebraska outscored the Irish the rest of the game, the return proved to be the catalyst in Notre Dame’s 14-9 triumph.

Not only was it Rockne’s first marquee victory, but it propelled a 9-0 season, resulting in Notre Dame being declared “Western Champions” and even national champions.

The glory days under Rockne had commenced.

— Lou Somogyi

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# They Were Who We Thought They Were

It seemed apropos during the Notre Dame-Stanford game that my reflection on the 2019 Fighting Irish football season brought former Cardinal head coach Dennis Green (1989-91) to mind.

While with the NFL's Arizona Cardinals, Green had his famous "They are who we thought they were!" rant in 2006 after blowing a 20-point lead in a 24-23 loss to the Chicago Bears.

That is the best way we can sum up the 2019 football team through its 10-2 regular season journey: They were who we thought they were in the preseason. Whether that is a plus or minus can be left to your own judgment and standards.

- In the preseason, our belief was this is a quality, top-eight to top-15, 10-2 program — and it is. The operation and infrastructure have evolved the past three years to the point where 10 wins in the regular season are no longer the ceiling, but more like the floor. Notre Dame isn't in the top tier with about a group of five or six, but it is in that next class.

- They would beat the teams they're supposed to defeat — and the majority of them were double-digit underdogs or just outmatched physically.

- They would lose to the teams most everyone expects them to lose to — which in this season's case were road games at Georgia and Michigan.

The difference was that whereas the Irish earned national respect for "coming close" in the 23-17 loss to the Bulldogs, they received even more ridicule for once again soiling the bed on a major stage during the 45-14 defeat versus the Wolverines.

- Beyond superpower Clemson, the ACC is weak and in a down cycle, which further fuels the "Notre Dame hasn't beat anybody really good" discourse. It doesn't help that Stanford is coming back to its football mean, while USC continues to underachieve from its historical norm.

The 2019 campaign was virtually identical to the 10-2 regular seasons in 2006 and 2015.



The 2019 Notre Dame team was projected in most circles to have a 10-2 regular season, with road games at Georgia and Michigan the most likely losses, and that's how the season did indeed transpire.

PHOTO BY KEN WARD/WARD PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

In 2006, with senior quarterback Brady Quinn at the helm, Notre Dame had several thrilling comeback wins against Georgia Tech, Michigan State and UCLA, but those three foes were a combined 20-19.

The lone victory against a ranked team was Penn State, which finished No. 25. The two marquee regular-season games were blowout losses to Michigan (47-21) and USC (44-24). Even head coach Charlie Weis admitted there was a "meh" feeling to the campaign.

Likewise in 2015, the Irish finished the regular season 10-2, with their showcase victory occurring against a Navy team that finished No. 19. USC was down again, so the two most anticipated outings were trips to Clemson and Stanford (just like this year to Georgia and Michigan), with both resulting in defeat.

Both the 2006 and 2015 seasons would have been viewed with more affinity if the underdog Irish could have defeated LSU in the 2007 Sugar Bowl or Ohio State in the 2016 Fiesta Bowl. Unfortunately, in both cases Notre Dame in a grand stage setting again was disposed of 41-14 by the Tigers and 44-28 by the Buckeyes.

They ended up being who people thought they were: status quo. The cy-

cle of "haven't we been here before?" was perpetuated.

There will be no such significant stage in this year's postseason game which, unless there is some outside help, appeared destined for the Camping World Bowl Dec. 28, or maybe versus a more ho-hum Group of Five opponent in the Cotton Bowl.

It's likely the Irish would be the favorite to win against whomever and record their first ever 11-2 outcome.

With a new decade on the horizon, let's look at this one step further.

Even after the Michigan debacle this October, it was easy to predict there was nobody better than the Irish on Notre Dame's five-game November slate. That

doesn't mean an upset couldn't occur on the right day — and almost did versus Virginia Tech — but I didn't think it would.

Now I am looking at next September and October, and my sentiment is the same.

Navy (neutral), Arkansas (home), Western Michigan (home) and Wake Forest (neutral) won't upset the Irish in September. They are outmatched.

Wisconsin (neutral), Stanford (home), at Pitt and Duke (home) will provide some good tests, but Notre Dame now wins these kind of games.

The Nov. 7, 2020 showdown with Clemson will be the most anticipated home game with College Football Playoff/national title hopes since USC 2005, and Notre Dame just might have a 14-game winning streak by then.

Will that finally be the game where Notre Dame wins "when it is not supposed to"?

Sooner or later, the Irish need to become more than who we thought they were in such settings. The next decade is as good as any to start. ♦



Senior Editor Lou Somogyi has been at *Blue & Gold Illustrated* since July 1985. He can be reached at [lsomogyi@blueandgold.com](mailto:lsomogyi@blueandgold.com)



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