

Streak Breakers

Notre Dame has helped build its football tradition with impressive records against top-ranked opponents and against teams entering with lengthy winning streaks. The Fighting Irish own eight victories over number-one-ranked teams (most recently over unbeaten Florida State in 1993)—with five of those coming in bowl games beginning with the 1971 Cotton Bowl. Notre Dame also has played the spoiler role on numerous occasions—eight times coming up with a victory or tie in an opponent's final game of the season to end a potential perfect season (Michigan State '66, Texas in '71 Cotton Bowl, Alabama in '73 Sugar Bowl, Alabama in '75 Orange Bowl, Texas in '78 Cotton Bowl, West Virginia in '89 Fiesta Bowl, Colorado in '90 Orange Bowl, Texas A&M in '93 Cotton Bowl). Here is a listing of games in which the Irish have put an end to an especially impressive winning streak maintained by an opponent:

Notre Dame 0, Army 0
November 9, 1946 **Yankee Stadium**

The Irish snapped the Cadets' 25-game victory string with this tie before 74,000 fans at Yankee Stadium in New York. Notre Dame defenders were the heroes—in particular Johnny Lujack on a late solo tackle of Doc Blanchard—as they successfully contained Blanchard and Glenn Davis. Each team barely eclipsed the 200-yard mark in total offense. The Irish avenged 59-0 and 48-0 defeats to Army the previous two years and thwarted the Cadets' chances for a third straight national title. At the time there had been only 10 longer winning streaks in the history of college football.

Notre Dame 27, Georgia Tech 14
October 24, 1953 **Notre Dame Stadium**

Heisman Trophy winner John Lattner and fullback Neil Worden keyed a dominating Notre Dame ground attack that helped the top-ranked Irish end fourth-rated Georgia Tech's 31-game unbeaten streak, then the longest current streak in college football. The Irish finished with a 323-131 edge in rushing yardage—led by Lattner's 96 yards and 101 by Worden. Notre Dame's four touchdowns marked the most by a Tech opponent during the streak—and a third period Ralph Guglielmi TD pass marked the first against Tech in 22 games. The win came despite the loss of Irish coach Frank Leahy, who fainted due to a lower chest muscle spasm while walking into the dressing room at halftime.

Notre Dame 7, Oklahoma 0
November 16, 1957 **Owen Field**

Notre Dame halfback Dick Lynch scored the only touchdown of the day as the unranked and twice-beaten Irish ended the second-ranked and defending national champion Sooners' 47-game winning streak, still the longest in college football history, and OU's 48-game unbeaten streak (fourth-longest in college football history). The Irish had been the last team to defeat Oklahoma before that contest, as they had been victorious on September 26, 1953, by a 28-21 count. Lynch's score came on a fourth-down pitch from the three-yard line with just 3:50 left on the clock. The Sooners drove to the Irish 13 on their first possession but never got closer.

Irish Play Spoiler Role

Here are details of the 12 games in which Notre Dame has ended an otherwise perfect season by an opponent in the final game of the season:

Date	Opponent	Site	Result
Nov. 27, 1913	.....Texas	.....Austin	.....W, 30-7
Nov. 22, 1930	.....Northwestern	.....Evanston	.....W, 14-0
Dec. 2, 1933	.....Army	.....New York City (Yankee Stadium)	.....W, 13-12
Nov. 21, 1936	.....Northwestern	.....South Bend	.....W, 26-6
Nov. 19, 1966	.....Michigan State	.....East Lansing	.....T, 10-10
Jan. 1, 1971	.....Texas	.....Dallas (Cotton Bowl)	.....W, 24-11
Dec. 31, 1973	.....Alabama	.....New Orleans (Sugar Bowl)	.....W, 24-23
Jan. 1, 1975	.....Alabama	.....Miami (Orange Bowl)	.....W, 13-11
Jan. 2, 1978	.....Texas	.....Dallas (Cotton Bowl)	.....W, 38-10
Jan. 2, 1989	.....West Virginia	.....Tempe (Fiesta Bowl)	.....W, 34-21
Jan. 1, 1990	.....Colorado	.....Miami (Orange Bowl)	.....W, 21-6
Jan. 1, 1993	.....Texas A&M	.....Dallas (Cotton Bowl)	.....W, 28-3

Notre Dame 24, Texas 11
January 1, 1971 **Cotton Bowl**

Joe Theismann paced the sixth-rated Irish to victory in the Cotton Bowl that ended the top-ranked Longhorns' 30-game winning streak and their bid for a second straight perfect season. Theismann accounted for three scores in the first 16 minutes of the game—throwing once to Tom Gatewood for a score and running twice for TDs himself—to give Notre Dame a 24-11 lead at halftime. The Irish defense, led by Walt Patulski and Mike Kadish, shut out the potent Texas offense in the second half, forcing nine fumbles, five of them recovered by Notre Dame.

Notre Dame 23, USC 14
October 27, 1973 **Notre Dame Stadium**

Eric Penick's 85-yard burst early in the third quarter keyed eighth-ranked Notre Dame's triumph that ended the sixth-rated Trojans' 23-game unbeaten string. The victory in Notre Dame Stadium was the pivotal triumph in Notre Dame's 1973 national championship season. The Irish held USC's Anthony Davis to 55 rushing yards, got field goals from Bob Thomas in each of the first three periods—then watched Penick deliver the deciding blow.

Notre Dame 31, Miami 30
October 15, 1988 **Notre Dame Stadium**

Despite giving up a record 424 passing yards to Miami's Steve Walsh, the Notre Dame defense forced seven turnovers to help the fourth-ranked Irish end the top-rated Hurricanes' 36-game regular-season winning streak. Miami also came into the game having won 20 straight road games and 16 games overall. The Hurricanes had not lost in an opponent's stadium since traveling to Michigan in 1984. Irish safety Pat Terrell made the deciding play, batting down a two-point conversion pass attempt by Walsh with 45 seconds to play.

Notre Dame 31, Florida State 24
November 13, 1993 **Notre Dame Stadium**

Second-ranked Notre Dame rolled to a 21-7 halftime lead, then held on down the stretch until Shawn Wooden knocked down a Charlie Ward pass attempt as time ran out to ensure the 31-24 triumph over unbeaten Florida State. The Irish victory ended the longest winning streak in the country at 16 (Notre Dame also had won 16 straight coming in), with the Seminoles having lost only once to a team outside the state of Florida since 1989. Notre Dame rushed for 239 yards and scored four rushing touchdowns, two more than Florida State had allowed in its first nine games combined.