



2007 Notre Dame Football Post-Game Notes



Notre Dame vs. Penn State
September 8, 2007

TEAM

- ◆ Penn State won the toss and elected to defer to the second half. The Nittany Lions defended the north end zone in the first half.
- ◆ The game between Notre Dame and Penn State was officially sold out, making it the 63rd in the last 69 road games for the Irish that were sold out. The 2001, 2003 and 2005 games at Stanford, the 2004 game vs. Navy (The Meadowlands), the 2005 game at Washington and the 2006 game at Air Force were not sellouts.
- ◆ The attendance of 110,078 is the second largest crowd in Beaver Stadium history. Tonight's game was the 17th time in school history Notre Dame played before a crowd of at least 100,000 people, and the first time since Sept. 10, 2005 at Michigan (111,386 at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor). The Irish now are 9-8 in such games. It is the fourth largest crowd to ever watch Notre Dame play (top three are all at Michigan).
- ◆ The following Notre Dame players extended streaks for consecutive starts: senior ILB Maurice Crum, Jr. (27), senior DE Trevor Laws (27), senior C John Sullivan (15), sophomore OT Sam Young (15), senior DB Terrail Lambert (12), senior SS Tom Zbikowski (9) and junior David Grimes (7).
- ◆ Notre Dame managed just five first downs the entire first half against Georgia Tech in the season opener, but the Irish registered three first downs on the opening drive Saturday night (Notre Dame missed a 50-yard field goal attempt).
- ◆ Sophomore DB **Darrin Walls'** 73-yard interception return for touchdown was the first Notre Dame touchdown of 2007. The Irish had not scored a touchdown since late in the second quarter of the 2007 Sugar Bowl. Notre Dame had gone 99 minutes and two seconds without a touchdown.
- ◆ Penn State's 78-yard punt return for touchdown by Derrick Williams was the first punt return for touchdown by an Irish opponent since Anthony Chambers of Purdue went 72 yards on Sept. 7, 2002.
- ◆ Notre Dame converted its initial third down of the game, but failed to convert on third down the rest of the first half (the Irish were just 1-for-7 on third down over the first 30 minutes Saturday). Meanwhile, Penn State was 5-for-8 on third downs in the first half, including converting on five of its first six.
- ◆ The Irish converted just two third downs the entire game (2-for-16).
- ◆ The Irish picked up 47 yards (11 plays) and three first downs of offense on their opening drive of the game (before missing a 50-yard field goal). Notre Dame managed just 31 yards (19 plays) and one first down the rest of the first half.
- ◆ Notre Dame was whistled for eight first half penalties for 54 yards, while Penn State was not whistled for a first down over the opening 30 minutes. The Irish finished the night with 14 penalties, the most under head coach Charlie Weis.
- ◆ Notre Dame picked up just 10 first downs on the night. It is the fewest first downs for an Irish team since they managed just seven at Michigan on Sept. 13, 2003.
- ◆ The Irish defense has faced quite an uphill battle in terms of field position against both Georgia Tech and Penn State. The Yellow Jackets had scoring drives of 16, 17, 21 and 36 yards (for a total of 16 points), while the Nittany Lions used a punt return for touchdown and a drive of seven yards (following a 63-yard kickoff return to open the second half) to record 10 points Saturday. Of the 64 points Notre Dame has surrendered in 2007, 26 (41%) have come on drives of less than 36 yards.

ROAD OPENERS...

- ◆ The Irish are now 75-33-5 (.692) in road openers.
- ◆ Notre Dame has dropped eight of its last 11 road openers.
- ◆ Notre Dame is 38-21-3 all-time when its road opener is against an Big 10 school.

TODAY'S LOSS...

- ◆ Be the first road opening loss since 2004 -- when the Irish lost at BYU, 20-17.

- ◆ Make the Irish 75-33-5 (.686) all-time in road openers.
- ◆ Even Notre Dame at 9-9-1 in the all-time series with Penn State.
- ◆ Drop the Irish to 2-6-1 in the all-time series with the Nittany Lions in Happy Valley.
- ◆ Drop Notre Dame to 4-7-0 all-time against a ranked Penn State squad.
- ◆ Drop Notre Dame to 1-4-0 all-time against a ranked Penn State squad in Happy Valley.
- ◆ Drop an unranked Notre Dame to 4-5-1 all-time against Penn State and 1-4-1 in Happy Valley.
- ◆ Drop Weis' record to 19-8 overall, 1-1 against Penn State and 5-4 against the Big 10 Conference.
- ◆ Drop Weis' road record to 8-2.
- ◆ Drop Weis' record to 7-4 in September games.
- ◆ Drop Weis' record to 13-6 in afternoon games.
- ◆ Drop Notre Dame's all-time record to 821-271-42 (.744).
- ◆ Drop the Irish all-time record on the road to 287-135-22 (.671).
- ◆ Drop Notre Dame's all-time record against the Big 10 Conference to 216-108-15 (.662).
- ◆ Drop Notre Dame's all-time record on the road against the Big 10 Conference to 95-68-9 (.608).

IN THE WEIS ERA

- ◆ Sophomore DB **Darrin Walls'** 73-yard interception return for touchdown was the first defensive touchdown of the season for the Irish and fifth under third year head coach Charlie Weis.
- ◆ The 14 penalties are the most under Weis.
- ◆ The 10 punts are the most under Weis.
- ◆ The 10 first downs are the fewest under Weis.
- ◆ The two third down conversions are the second fewest under Weis.

INDIVIDUAL

- ◆ Senior SS **Tom Zbikowski** forced his fifth and sixth career fumbles Saturday night. Zbikowski also forced a fumble in Notre Dame's 41-17 victory over Penn State a season ago. He added another forced fumble just before halftime.
- ◆ Zbikowski added a 47-yard punt return to set up a field goal bringing the Irish within a touchdown, 17-10. The punt return was the fourth of his career that exceeded 45 yards.
- ◆ Zbikowski, now 130 career tackles, became Notre Dame's all-time leader in tackles by a defensive back surpassing the previous school record of 228 stops by Jim Browner (1976-78).
- ◆ Senior DT **Trevor Laws** picked up his first career fumble recovery just before halftime. Laws finished the night with a career-high 10 tackles.
- ◆ Senior ILB **Joe Brockington**, a native of Palmyra, Pa. recovered his first career fumble. He finished the night with a season-high 10 tackles, including 1.5 for loss.
- ◆ Senior P **Geoff Price** recorded a career-high nine punts. The previous career-high for Price, who averaged xx.xx yards per punt, was seven (set on three previous occasions), including in last week's season opener. The 403 yards on the nine punts was also a career best for the Ray Guy Award candidate.
- ◆ Junior NT **Pat Kuntz** recorded a career-best eight tackles, including a half tackle for loss.
- ◆ Sophomore WR **Robby Parris'** 35 yard reception in the fourth quarter was the longest of his career.



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- ◆ Sophomore DB **Darrin Walls** not only registered his first career interception, but the Pittsburgh, Pa. native returned it 73-yards for a touchdown. The interception return was the first for the Irish since Terrail Lambert turned the task against Michigan State in 2006. The 73-yard INT return was the longest interception return since current senior Tom Zbikowski returned a pick 83 yards against BYU on Oct. 22, 2005.

- ◆ Freshman QB **Jimmy Clausen** became the eighth freshman to ever start at quarterback for Notre Dame (since at least 1950). He is the first rookie signal caller to start since Brady Quinn got the call against Purdue on Sept. 27, 2003. With tonight's being the second game of the season, Clausen is the first Notre Dame freshman to ever start this early into a season. The other freshman to earn starts for the Irish include Matt LoVecchio (2000), Paul Fails (1991), Kent Graham (1987), Steve Beuerlein (1983), Blair Kiel (1980) and Ralph Guglielmi (1951).

- ◆ Sophomore OLB **Morrice Richardson** picked his first career sack on a critical third down play late in the first quarter to set up a Penn State punt. Richardson added his second career sack later in the first half. Richardson finished the night with a career-best xx tackles.