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The Notre Dame men's tennis team was honored for its accomplishments during the 2005-06 season – which included its 15th NCAA tournament bid in the last 16 years – at the 2006 Irish football game against Michigan in front of a crowd of 80,795.

Men's Tennis Quick Facts

Notre Dame Quick Facts

LocationNotre Dame, IN 46556
 Founded1842
 Enrollment8,380 (undergraduate), 11,311 (total)
 Nickname.....Fighting Irish
 Colors.....Gold and Blue
 Conference.....BIG EAST
 Home Courts (Outdoor)Courtney Tennis Center
 Home Courts (Indoor).....Eck Tennis Pavilion
 PresidentRev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.
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Notre Dame Sports Hotline:

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Media Information

The Notre Dame Sports Information Office always is interested in assisting members of the media in their coverage of Irish tennis. Publicity and media information for Notre Dame tennis is coordinated by assistant sports information director Michael Bertsch.

- **Statistics, Match Notes, Recaps, Releases** - See und.com.
- **Credentials, Photographs, Interview Requests, Feature Ideas, Questions** - Contact Bertsch.
- **Live Statistics** - Available free for all home matches and selected road contests, via und.com.
- **Wireless Internet** - Available free to all visiting media and SIDs visiting the Eck Tennis Pavilion. See Bertsch for details.
- **Television Footage** - Contact local stations (WHME, WSBT, WNDU, WSJV). See page 2 for contact information.

BIG EAST Conference

The BIG EAST Conference maintains its presence on the World Wide Web at www.bigeast.org. The site contains current information on all facets of the BIG EAST Conference. Please contact Allison Hoehn in the BIG EAST media relations department (rengrissei@bigeast.org) for more information on BIG EAST tennis.

Credits

The Notre Dame Men's Tennis Guide was written and edited by assistant sports information director Michael Bertsch with editorial assistance from student assistants Ryan Kiefer and Sarah Wladecki.

Graphic design and page layout by Cindy Lemcke of Ave Maria Press, Inc. Inside and outside cover designs by Dave Scholtes of Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Ind.

Photography by Mike Bennett and Lighthouse Imaging, Matt Cashore, Heather Gollatz, Greg Owen, J.C. Ridley, Guy Rogers, L.K. Dunn, Kevin Burke and Notre Dame photographic, Pete LaFleur, Angela Addington, David Silverman, and Fred Mullane.

Printing by Ave Maria Press in Notre Dame, Ind.



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Blue & Gold Illustrated

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College Tennis Online

www.collegetennisonline.com

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1000 Wilson Boulevard
22nd Floor
Arlington, VA 22229
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WHME TV/Radio

(Bob Nagle/Chuck Freeby)
61300 Ironwood Road
South Bend, IN 46625
(574) 291-8200
Fax (574) 291-9043

WNDU-TV - NBC

(Jeff Jeffers)
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South Bend, IN 46634
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WSBT-TV/Radio - CBS

(Greg Carroll/Pete Byrne/
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Fax (574) 288-6630

WSJV-TV - FOX

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New York, NY 10011
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WDND-ESPN Radio 1000

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Radio Tennis

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United States Tennis Association

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- Comprehensive coverage of every sport
- Live game audio & video programming
- Exclusive features
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- Wireless updates
- Games, auctions and contests

COLLEGEsports

NOTRE DAME SEASON PREVIEW



Senior captain Stephen Bass has filled the No. 1 spot for the Irish each of the past two seasons and will likely do the same in 2007. He is on pace to finish among the top 10 in Notre Dame history in overall singles victories (73-35) and top five in singles victories at No. 1 (20-19).



Fighting Irish Tennis Hoping for Breakthrough in 2006-07

Experience from last season has only made Notre Dame stronger

After making its 15th appearance in the NCAA Championships over the last 16 years, the Notre Dame men's tennis team hopes for even greater success in 2006-07 with the return of the bulk of its lineup and another talented freshman class. Lost to graduation were Patrick Buchanan and Eric Langenkamp, but 20th-year head coach Bob Bayliss welcomes back five of his top six players, including junior All-American Sheeva Parbhu and senior Stephen Bass, as part of a determined group of returning individuals.

"This year's team has done a good job of positioning itself for a breakout year," said Bayliss. "Individually we had an outstanding fall. Stephen's [Bass] semifinal finish at the National Indoors, Sheeva's quarterfinals showing at last year's NCAA Championships, Barry's finish at the Midland Invitational, Brett's potential and the showing that Ryan and Sheeva had in doubles at the Indoors show that we can win high in our lineup.

"These things have placed us high enough in the rankings to be in the National Team Indoors and, that - plus the already strong national schedule which includes home matches against Illinois, Duke, Florida State and Michigan - gives us the opportunities to prove that we are an elite team."

The Irish will be hungry to not only improve upon their NCAA round of 16 loss to top-ranked Georgia that ended their 2005-06 season with a 19-9 record, but to regain dominance in the BIG EAST Conference. Louisville upset top-seeded

Notre Dame in last year's BIG EAST Tournament final. The Irish were looking for their third consecutive title and sixth in program history.

"Perhaps our biggest asset is last year's experience," said Bayliss. "We opened the spring with three tough losses to teams ranked in the top 10, but we came back and knocked off Ohio State. Similarly, after losing the Big East final, we came back to down Texas A&M in College Station and knocked the Aggies out of the NCAA tournament before the Sweet 16 for the first time in seven years.

"Our guys have been through the wars and have tasted enough success to know what it feels like, but have lost 4-3 decisions often enough that they still remember those experiences. Reaching the Sweet 16 a year ago gave us a taste of what we want, but certainly left us hungry for more. This year we expect to be in the same position and will not be satisfied unless we advance further."

This past fall, Notre Dame showcased its depth and ability to compete on a national stage. Bass became the first Irish player ever to reach the semifinals of the ITA National Indoor Championship, while Parbhu reached the finals of the ITA Midwest Championship for the second consecutive season. Senior Ryan Keckley and Parbhu also qualified for the ITA National Indoor Doubles Championship after winning the ITA Midwest title.

Parbhu, who played most of last season at No. 2 singles, went 33-8 in 2006 (now 65-15 for his career) and was ranked 28th in the final ITA national, singles rankings after being the first Irish men's player to advance to the quarterfinals of the NCAA Singles Championship since 1959. He led Notre Dame in singles victories, registering the most since current assistant coach Ryan Sachire was 37-9 in 1998-99. Parbhu was the first Notre Dame All-American since Javier Taborga (singles and doubles) and Casey Smith (doubles) in 2001-02. He also participated with the 2006 USTA Summer Collegiate Team - one of six male collegiate players on the squad.

"Sheeva has the mentality of a CIA operative," said Bayliss. "He really focuses entirely on winning rather than looking pretty. He may be the most improved player in college tennis



Sophomore Brett Helgeson had a brilliant freshman season posting a 23-11 record and gives the Irish a dynamic player in the No. 3 spot in the singles order.

over the past two years, as he has gone from a very good No. 4 player to a quarterfinalist in last year's NCAAs. He had weaknesses when he arrived, but has made some of them into strengths and has really developed weapons off both wings."

Bass enters his senior year after playing much of the past two years in the No. 1 singles position. He went 27-14 in singles, including 14-12 in dual action. Bass, now 73-35 over his first three seasons with the Irish, ranked second on the Irish in singles victories and finished the season as the 29th-rated singles player in the NCAA. He climbed as high as 8th in singles - becoming the third Notre Dame player ever to crack the top 10.

"Stephen has made a firm and measured commitment over his Notre Dame career to become the best player he can be," Bayliss said. "He arrived with a second serve that, at times, needed a tailwind to help it clear the net. His forehand was defensive and he rarely came to the net. Now, he is simply one of the elite

Team Information

2005-06 Record: 19-9

2005-06 Final ITA National Ranking: 17th

2006 BIG EAST Championship:

2-1, runner-up
Notre Dame 4, Georgetown 0
Notre Dame 4, South Florida 0
Louisville 4, Notre Dame 1

2006 NCAA Championship:

2-1, round of 16
Notre Dame 4, Brown 3
Notre Dame 4, Texas A&M 2
Georgia 4, Notre Dame 0

Starters Returning:

Stephen Bass (Sr.)
Barry King (Sr.)
Sheeva Parbhu (Jr.)
Brett Helgeson (So.)
Ryan Keckley (Sr.)

Monogram Winners Returning/Lost: 6/2

2006-07 Team Captain:

Stephen Bass

players in the country, having won the Midwest Regional Singles title a year ago and having reached the semifinals of this year's National Indoors. This is a result of hard work, dedication and a fierce desire for greatness."

While the Irish will depend on Parbhu and Bass to turn in 30-plus singles win seasons, the play of sophomore Brett Helgeson, senior Barry King and senior Ryan Keckley will be a strong indicator of the team's success. The trio will not only fill out the No. 3, No. 4 and No. 5 spots in the singles order, but each will play significant roles in doubles.

Helgeson had a brilliant freshman season a year ago. He went 23-11 in 2006, including 16-10 in dual action mostly at No. 3 (11-8). He was named to the BIG EAST Conference all-tournament team in singles. Helgeson's season was highlighted by his triumph over #6 Treat Huey of Virginia, 6-7, 6-1, 6-1 – the highest-ranked player to fall victim to a Notre Dame player since Javier Taborga beat then-#3 K.J. Hippensteel of Stanford on Oct. 12, 2000. He was second on the team with four match-clinching victories and reached the round of 16 at the ITA Midwest Regional Championships.

"Brett is the best ball striker we have," Bayliss said. "He can be absolutely devastating off the ground and with his serve. His challenge is to incorporate these weapons into an all-court philosophy that will allow him to showcase what he can do by coming to the net with a real purpose. When he truly understands the all-court philosophy, it is scary to think how good he might become."

King and Keckley split time last season between the No. 4 and 5 spots in the lineup. King went 14-8 overall, all in dual action after missing the fall season studying overseas. He was 5-2 at No. 3, 2-3 at No. 4 and 7-3 at No. 5. Keckley finished the season 21-7 in singles and 19-6 in dual action. The 19 dual victories were tied for the team-high. He went 11-5 at No. 4, 8-1 at No. 5 and climbed into the national rankings at #115 following his victory over #125 Georges-Alexandre Israel of VCU. Keckley, who opened the season with 16 victories over his first 18 matches, clinched Notre Dame's berth into the NCAA Tournament round of 16 with a victory over Brett Joelson of Texas A&M.

"Barry arrived with a strong backcourt identity, rarely venturing to the net and seldom taking any chances off the ground, but was very steady and covered a lot of court," said Bayliss. "He was a 6'5" counter-puncher playing a game not really suited to his physical attributes. We encouraged him to play a bigger game and, I am happy to say, it looks as if it may pay off this season.

"Ryan progressed from a promising player who lacked consistency to the toughest out in our lineup last season. He is an attacking player who is at his best at the net where he consistently demonstrates an uncanny ability to finish points. He became very solid off the ground last year and proved that he could outlast some very strong players from the backcourt. He is our most instinctive doubles player and I have high hopes that he and Sheeva Parbhu will maintain their top 10 ranking all year."

Senior Irackli Akhvediani and junior Andrew Roth each will look to expand their role this spring after battling through injuries most of last season. Akhvediani went 3-3 overall in singles last year, including a 1-1 mark in dual action (all at No. 6). In 2004-05, he finished the season with a record of 26-14 overall in singles, including 13-9 in dual action (2-2 at No. 4, 11-7 at No. 5). Roth went 8-4 overall and 2-2 in dual action (1-0 at No. 5 and 1-2 at No. 6). Roth made more of an impact in doubles, posting a 13-8 mark. He was 9-7 in dual action, going 4-3 with Helgeson at No. 3 and 4-3 with departed Eric Langenkamp (1-3 at No. 2 and 3-0 at No. 3).

"Bubba' was a strong presence at No. 5 during his sophomore year, but injuries hampered him a year ago and he saw very little action in the dual match season," said Bayliss. "He has strong ground strokes and has responded well to the direction we have given him – to be more aggressive and take advantage of opportunities to attack.

"Andrew has been hampered by injuries his entire Notre Dame career, but this fall gave indication that he is ready to be the 'sparkplug' in the lower lineup," added Bayliss. "He can be your worst nightmare in a tight match – having weapons off the ground, but not afraid to attack. Andrew has improved his second serve and backhand and is opening his stance on that side, giving him a quicker recovery and more explosive power. His confidence in attacking a second serve gives him another way to hurt you.

Sophomore Santiago Montoya also returns with his sights set on challenging for a spot in the Irish lineup. Montoya saw very limited action last season, going 2-3 in singles and 2-8 in doubles.

"He is perhaps the team's hardest worker and shows consistent improvement," said Bayliss. "He might have made his biggest strides this fall when he showed some terrific results. He is definitely in the loop for a doubles position this spring and has grown significantly as a singles player. At first, he was always trying to win every point and never gave you a chance to miss, but he now understands percentages and has shored up his weaknesses."

Bayliss also will point to members of Notre Dame's freshman class for contributions. Sean Corrigan enters Notre Dame with a strong backhand and already has proven his ability to play on both the ITF and USTA level. Takashi Yoshii's power and work ethic should provide a boost to the Irish lineup, while Patrick Callaghan offers a rare combination of speed and grit. Graham King and Dan Schafer also could contribute.

In addition to necessary contributions from the freshman class, Bayliss sees other points of emphasis for the Irish.

"One of the keys to success this year is our doubles play," said Bayliss. "Our No. 1 team of Keckley and Parbhu has a preseason national ranking of #9, so that is a good start. We need Helgeson and King to play big and become an overpowering presence at No. 2, allowing them to flourish. With Bass, Roth and Montoya we feel we can be outstanding at No. 3. Establishing a strong doubles identity at the start of the season will be critical to our development. Hopefully our singles will take care of themselves. We have four or five guys capable of playing and winning at the top of our lineup and several great options for the lower positions. In short, we have strength at the top, balance at the bottom and the promise of beginning each match with the critical doubles point in hand."

Awaiting the Irish is a perennially challenging schedule that includes Ohio State, Illinois, Duke, Virginia, Florida State and Washington. In all, 12 of Notre Dame's 18 regular-season opponents – not including the teams the Irish will face in the Blue-Gray National Tennis Classic, which traditionally provides several ranked tests for ND – were listed in the preseason rankings, with six ranking in the top 20.



Senior Ryan Keckley finished last season with a 21-7 singles record and led the Irish with 19 dual victories. In addition to most likely filling the No. 4 singles spot, he will team with junior Sheeva Parbhu at No. 1 doubles. The duo enters the 2007 season ranked #11 in the ITA.

2006-07 UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME MEN'S TENNIS ROSTER

Player	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Born	Hometown/High School
** Irackli Akhvlediani £	5-7	145	Sr.	GEO	Vienna, Austria/Vienna International School
*** Stephen Bass (c)	5-11	165	Sr.	THA	Bronxville, NY/Iona Preparatory School
* Brett Helgeson	6-4	180	So.	USA	Overland Park, KS/Blue Valley West H.S.
*** Ryan Keckley	6-1	160	Sr.	USA	South Bend, IN/St. Joseph's H.S.
*** Barry King	6-4	186	Sr.	IRE	Dublin, Ireland/Gonzaga College
* Santiago Montoya	6-1	165	So.	COL	Scottsdale, AZ/St. Stephen's Episcopal School [TX]
** Sheeva Parbhu	5-11	150	Jr.	USA	Omaha, NE/Millard North H.S.
** Andrew Roth £	5-9	160	Jr.	USA	Houston, TX/Tenney School
Daniel Schafer	6-0	165	Fr.	USA	Edgewood, KY/Covington Catholic H.S.
Patrick Callaghan	5-11	155	Fr.	USA	Iowa City, IA/Iowa City West H.S.
Sean Corrigan	6-0	175	Fr.	USA	Lido Beach, NY/Long Beach H.S.
Graham King £	6-2	180	Fr.	IRE	Dublin, Ireland/Gonzaga College
Takashi Yoshii	5-10	155	Fr.	USA	Tokyo, Japan/The American School of Japan

Head Coach: Bob Bayliss (20th season, Richmond '66)

Assistant Coach: Ryan Sachire (1st season, Notre Dame '00)

Volunteer Assistant Coach: Dr. Hugh Page (12th season, Hampton '77)

Senior Manager: Megan McBride (2nd season, Saint Mary's '07)

Racket Technician: Jamie Rowland (2nd season, Notre Dame '08)

* – denotes monograms earned • c – denotes captain • £ – indicates left-handed player

Pronunciation Guide

Irackli Akhvlediani ih-RACK-lee auk-vhled-ee-AWN-ee
 Helgeson HELL-guh-sin
 Sheeva Parbhu SHEE-vuh PAR-boo
 Takashi Yoshii Tuh-KA-shee YO-shee

Roster Breakdown by Class:

Seniors (4): Akhvlediani, Bass, Keckley, B. King

Juniors (2): Parbhu, Roth

Sophomores (2): Helgeson, Montoya

Freshmen (5): Schafer, Callaghan, Corrigan, G. King, Yoshii



The 2006-07 Notre Dame Men's Tennis Team: (kneeling, from left) Irackli Akhvlediani, Brandon Pierpont (no longer on team), Ryan Keckley, Andrew Roth, Sheeva Parbhu, Takashi Yoshii, Sean Corrigan and Graham King. (back row, from left): senior manager Megan McBride, volunteer assistant coach Dr. Hugh Page, Barry King, Brett Helgeson, Santiago Montoya, Stephen Bass, Andrew Schafer, assistant coach Ryan Sachire and head coach Bob Bayliss.