

May 1, 2004

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Contact: Adam Porcelli (574) 631-7516

Notre Dame Ready To Make First-Ever NCAA Appearance

No. 19-seeded Irish will travel to Normal, Ill., for the Central Regionals, May 6-8.

NOTRE DAME, Ind. - The Notre Dame women's golf team's remarkable 2003-04 campaign will resume next Thursday-Saturday, May 6-8, when the Irish make their first-ever postseason appearance in the 16-year history of the program. Notre Dame will be the No. 19 seed in the Central Regional of the 2004 NCAA Division I Women's Golf Championships. The 54-hole regional tournament is being hosted by Illinois State in Normal, Ill., and will be played at the par-71, 6,108-yard University Golf Course.

The NCAA Women's Golf Championships consist of three regionals (East, Central, West) with each having 21 teams and three additional individuals participating in a 54-hole tournament (18 holes each day). The top eight teams from each regional, along with two additional individuals, will advance to the NCAA Championships, May 18-21. Auburn University will host the 2004 NCAA finals at the Grand National Lake Course in Opelika, Ala.

LIVE SCORING AVAILABLE: The Central Regional will be utilizing live scoring for the tournament and will be available by either going to <http://www.redbirds.org/WG/WGRegional.shtml> or <http://www.golfstatresults.com>. A recap and results from each day's action will also be available at www.und.com.

CENTRAL REGIONAL PARTICIPANTS:

Seed	Team (national seed)	Golfstat Rating	Bid/Conference
1.	Vanderbilt (#3)	3	Automatic/Southeastern
2.	New Mexico (#4)	4	At-large/Mountain West
3.	Arizona (#9)	9	At-large/Pac-10
4.	USC (#10)	10	At-large/Pac-10
5.	Oklahoma (#15)	14	At-large/Big XII
6.	Michigan State	22	At-large/Big Ten
7.	Tulsa	13	Automatic/Western Athletic
8.	Missouri	27	At-large/Big XII
9.	Texas Christian	35	At-large/Conference USA
10.	Arkansas	29	At-large/Southeastern
11.	Texas A&M	30	At-large/Big XII
12.	Kansas State	45	At-large/Big XII
13.	Indiana	31	At-large/Big Ten
14.	Southern Methodist	44	At-large/Western Athletic
15.	Kent State	38	Automatic/Mid-American
16.	Purdue	37	At-large/Big Ten
17.	Northwestern	39	At-large/Big Ten
18.	Baylor	41	At-large/Big XII
19.	Notre Dame	53	At-large/BIG EAST
20.	Princeton	76	Automatic/Ivy
21.	Illinois State	88	Automatic/Missouri Valley

Individuals

1. Malinda Johnson, Wisconsin; 2. Linda Svensson, Arkansas-Little Rock; 3. Laura Olin, Michigan

NOTRE DAME VS. CENTRAL REGIONAL TEAMS: In its 11 tournaments during the regular season, Notre Dame faced 12 of the other 20 Central Regional teams and compiled a 9-25 record versus those schools. The Irish did not face any of the five nationally-seeded teams throughout the course of the year. Notre Dame met Indiana most often, going 1-4 against the 13th-seeded Hoosiers in five tourneys. The Irish fared the best versus No. 21 Illinois State as they beat the Redbirds on three of the four occasions the schools played in the same tournament. The following is the list of teams Notre Dame has previously met in '03-04 and the Irish's head-to-head record against them:

No. 6 Michigan State: 0-3
No. 8 Missouri: 0-4
No. 9 Texas Christian: 0-1
No. 10 Arkansas: 0-2
No. 11 Texas A&M: 1-0
No. 12 Kansas State: 1-1
No. 13 Indiana: 1-4
No. 14 Southern Methodist: 1-1
No. 15 Kent State: 2-2
No. 16 Purdue: 0-1
No. 17 Northwestern: 0-2
No. 18 Baylor: 0-3
No. 21: Illinois State: 3-1

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SEEDS: In parentheses is each school's regional seed, followed by its national seed.

Vanderbilt (1/3) – The Commodores won four tournaments this season and finished in the top three in two additional events. Vanderbilt will head to the Central Regional fresh off of winning its first-ever SEC Championship. At the SEC tournament, Vanderbilt was led by the first-place performance turned in by SEC Co-Player of the Year May Wood. Wood and Sarah Jacobs were voted to the SEC's first team while Courtney Wood and Chris Brady were second-team selections. With the conference's automatic bid, Vanderbilt will be making its fifth consecutive trip to the NAAs. In 2003, Vanderbilt tied for second at the East Regional before finishing 14th at the National Championship.

New Mexico (2/4) – The Lobos have earned an NCAA berth for the 12th consecutive season. New Mexico has claimed four tournament titles this year as well as placing in the top 10 in all nine of its tournaments. Katrina Leckovic, Kailin Downs, Shannon Johnson and Ashley Rollins were all named all-Mountain West selections. Rollins was also named the Mountain West Conference Freshman of the Year.

Arizona (3/9) – The Wildcats ended their regular season by taking third at the Pac-10 Championship. Arizona's best outing came at the Edean Ihlanfeldt Invitational where it won the event with an 896. Erica Blasberg is the top 'Cat on Arizona's '03-04 squad. Blasberg was named to the all-Pac-10 first team after finishing third at the Pac-10 tournament with a five-over par 221. In addition, Blasberg won three consecutive tournaments during the fall and has placed in the top 10 seven times this season.

USC (4/10) – The Trojans will travel to Normal as the defending national champions. USC finished in the top five in all five of its spring tournaments, including a second-place showing at the Ping/Arizona State Invitational and a fourth-place finish at the Pac-10 Championship. The Trojans are led by first-team all-Pac-10 selection Irene Cho, who is averaging a team-best 74.78. Cho, an honorable mention All-American in 2002-03, has three top-10 finishes (including the individual title at the Edean Ihlanfeldt Invitational) this season.

Oklahoma (5/15) – In 2003, OU played in the Central Regional in Lincoln, Neb., but failed by a mere two strokes to qualify for the NCAA Championships. The Sooners are coming off the Big XII Championships where they finished fourth. Oklahoma has won three tournaments this season (Susie Maxwell Berning Classic, Price's Give 'Em Five Intercollegiate, Kent Youel Invitational). Lisa Meldrum is the top Sooner in '03-04 with a stroke average of 74.7 (29 rounds), which includes a fourth-place showing at the Big XII Championships with a score of 147 (72-75).

THE IRISH LINEUP: Third-year head coach **Debby King** will bring a lineup with her to Normal, Ill., consisting of a mix of all four classes. After careful consideration, King has comprised the Irish traveling party with five of her top players from both this season and in the history of the program. The players are listed according to their lineup position to begin the Central Regionals.

Freshman **Noriko Nakazaki** (Hanover Park, Ill./Hoffman Estates) will start the event as the team's No. 1 golfer after leading the '03-04 squad with an average of 76.21, which is on pace to set a program record for stroke average in a single season. The rookie was one of two golfers to play in all 11 of Notre Dame's tournaments this season with 30 of her 33 rounds counting toward team scoring. Nakazaki also has tied an Irish single-season record for team-leading efforts with seven, including her Irish-leading third-place finish (75-70-77—222) at the BIG EAST Championship to earn all-BIG EAST accolades. Nakazaki's best performance of the season came in her first-ever collegiate tournament. In the season-opening Cougar Classic, she fired rounds of 69, 72 and 76 for a school-record 54-hole total of 217. Nakazaki's first-round 69, one of seven rounds of even par or better this season, also set a Notre Dame record for low round.

Next for Notre Dame is one of the top golfers in the program's history, sophomore **Katie Brophy** (Spokane, Wash./Gonzaga Prep). Brophy currently holds the school record for career stroke average with a 77.75 (67 rounds). The two-time all-BIG EAST selection ('02-03 and '03-04) is one of two golfers to play in all 11 of Notre Dame's tournaments thus far and is second on the team with a 77.03 stroke average. Brophy turned in three top-five finishes this season, including a tie for second at the Indiana Invitational. At the Shootout at the Legends of Indiana, the 2003 BIG EAST co-champion fired a career-low 54-hole total of five-over par 221 (75-72-74), which is the third-best 54-hole mark in program history. Brophy shot a career-low final-round 71 at the Edwin Watts/Palmetto Intercollegiate to tie the third-lowest 18-hole total in school history.

Junior **Karen Lotta** (Los Angeles, Calif./Marymount) starts the NCAAs as the No. 3 Irish golfer after turning in a solid regular season, playing in nine tournaments (27 rounds) and averaging 78.81 (third on the team). Lotta is coming off her top spring performance, taking seventh at the BIG EAST Championship with rounds of 81, 72 (tying a career low) and 76 for a 229 total to give her all-BIG EAST honors for the second consecutive season. The junior carded a career low for 54 holes at the Edwin Watts/Palmetto Intercollegiate, shooting nine-over par 225 (78-75-72). Lotta led the team during the spring campaign with 14 of her 15 rounds counting towards the team score.

The other freshman on the '03-04 Irish squad, **Stacy Brown** (The Woodlands, Texas/The Woodlands), follows Lotta. Brown struggled a little in the spring, but turned in a 78.90 scoring average for the season with 14 of her 18 rounds as a member of the scoring lineup counting towards the team's score. Brown tied for 25th in her first collegiate tournament with scores of 72 (season low), 83 and 74 for a 54-hole total of 229 at the season-opening Cougar Classic. Brown turned in the best performance of her young Notre Dame career at the Edwin Watts/Palmetto Intercollegiate, tying for sixth by carding a pair of 73's and a final-round 78 for a season-low mark of 224 (+8).

Rounding out the Irish contingent in the regionals will be senior co-captain **Shannon Byrne** (Arlington Heights, Ill./Buffalo Grove). Similar to Brown, Byrne fared better in the fall than this spring, but is ready to leave Notre Dame on a high note in the NCAAs. A regular contributor throughout her college career, Byrne will be playing in her eighth tournament this year and the 39th tournament of her career. Byrne is yet another Irish golfer who set career bests in '03-04, firing a first-round 70 at the Cougar Classic for the lowest 18-hole total of her Irish career and the second-lowest round in school history. Byrne also shot a career-low 54-hole mark of seven-over 223 (70-79-74) at the Cougar Classic.

NOTRE DAME HEAD COACH DEBBY KING: In her third year on the job, head coach Debby King has brought in a higher caliber of recruits, increased the quality of the schedule and as a result, has led Notre Dame to its first-ever berth in the NCAA Women's Golf Championships. The first full-time coach in the 16-year history of the program, King has wasted little time in elevating the Notre Dame program to the next level. Under her direction, the Irish have realized unprecedented success, including the winning of back-to-back BIG EAST titles in 2003 and 2004, the first two seasons the league has sponsored women's golf.

In three seasons under King, the Notre Dame team has experienced dramatic improvements. King's teams have rewritten the Irish record books as they progress toward achieving their goal of being one of the top programs in the country. Prior to her arrival, Notre Dame had a team average of 323.26 in 2000-01; King has led the '03-04 squad to a school-record average of 308.58. The current roster of 10 now owns the top four career stroke averages, the top seven stroke averages for a single

season, the top 11 54-hole totals and eight of the 11 lowest rounds in school history. This season, Irish golfers have turned in seven top-five and 16 top-10 performances. Overall, the 2003-04 squad has 21 top-five finishes with 18 coming during King's tenure, 11 of which have been produced by King's first two recruiting classes. In addition, King's recruits also are responsible for tying or setting five individual program records.

King has been at the helm for the setting of numerous team records. During the '03-04 campaign, King has guided Notre Dame to a program-record four tournament wins. The most impressive achievement from this season is the complete overhaul of both the all-time list of lowest team rounds and the all-time list of lowest 54-hole totals. Ten of the top 12 scores on the low-round list were turned in this year, including the top four spots, as well as the top five 54-hole marks in program history.

King will be making her fifth NCAA appearance overall at the Central Regionals after taking Memphis to the NAAs four times ('97, '98, '99, '01). While at Memphis (1995-2001), King won two Conference USA titles and was named both the Conference USA Coach of the Year and the LPGA National Coach of the Year in 1997. King was also selected as the 1996 PGA West Tennessee Teacher of the Year and has playing experience as both a LPGA Class A member and as a PGA Class A member.

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE: All three rounds of the Central Regional will be played with set tee times from holes #1 and #10. Tee times begin at 8:00 a.m. (EST) each day with the last group going off at 2:00 p.m. (EST) on Thursday (May 6) and 1:50 p.m. (EST) on both Friday and Saturday (May 7 and 8). Each school's seed determines its tee times for the first two rounds of play with the final round times based on the tournament standings after 36 holes of play. The five Notre Dame players will tee off from the first hole in round one, beginning at 1:20 p.m., and from hole #10 for the second round, beginning at 8:50 a.m. The following is complete schedule of tee times for the tournament:

ROUND ONE--THURSDAY, MAY 6

<u>TIME</u>	<u>1st TEE</u>	<u>10th TEE</u>
8:00 a.m.		<i>Individuals</i>
	<i>Tulsa, Missouri, TCU</i>	<i>Arkansas, Texas A&M, Kansas St.</i>
8:10 a.m.	#5	#5
8:20 a.m.	#4	#4
8:30 a.m.	#3	#3
8:40 a.m.	#2	#2
8:50 a.m.	#1	#1
	<i>Vanderbilt, New Mexico, Arizona</i>	<i>USC, Oklahoma, Mich. St.</i>
9:00 a.m.	#5	#5
9:10 a.m.	#4	#4
9:20 a.m.	#3	#3
9:30 a.m.	#2	#2
9:40 a.m.	#1	#1
	<i>Indiana, SMU, Kent St.</i>	<i>Purdue, Northwestern, Baylor</i>
12:30 p.m.	#5	#5
12:40 p.m.	#4	#4
12:50 p.m.	#3	#3
1:00 p.m.	#2	#2
1:10 p.m.	#1	#1
	Notre Dame, Princeton, Illinois St.	
1:20 p.m.	#5	
1:30 p.m.	#4	
1:40 p.m.	#3	
1:50 p.m.	#2	
2:00 p.m.	#1	

ROUND TWO--FRIDAY, MAY 7

<u>TIME</u>	<u>1st TEE</u>	<u>10th TEE</u>
8:00 a.m.	#5	#5
8:10 a.m.	#4	#4
8:20 a.m.	#3	#3
8:30 a.m.	#2	#2
8:40 a.m.	#1	#1
	<i>Purdue, Northwestern, Baylor</i>	<i>Indiana, SMU, Kent St.</i>
8:50 a.m.	#5	#5
9:00 a.m.	#4	#4
9:10 a.m.	#3	#3
9:20 a.m.	#2	#2
9:30 a.m.	#1	#1
	<i>Arkansas, Texas A&M, Kansas St.</i>	Notre Dame, Princeton, Illinois St.
12:20 p.m.	#5	#5
12:30 p.m.	#4	#4
12:40 p.m.	#3	#3
12:50 p.m.	#2	#2
1:00 p.m.	#1	#1
	<i>USC, Oklahoma, Mich. St.</i>	<i>Vanderbilt, New Mexico, Arizona</i>
1:10 p.m.	<i>Individuals</i>	#5
1:20 p.m.		#4
1:30 p.m.		#3
1:40 p.m.		#2
1:50 p.m.		#1
		<i>Tulsa, Missouri, TCU</i>

ROUND THREE--SATURDAY, MAY 8

<u>TIME</u>	<u>1st TEE</u>	<u>10th TEE</u>
8:00 a.m.	#5	#5
8:10 a.m.	#4	#4
8:20 a.m.	#3	#3
8:30 a.m.	#2	#2
8:40 a.m.	#1	#1
	<i>Teams 19, 20, 21</i>	<i>Teams 16, 17, 18.</i>
8:50 a.m.	#5	#5
9:00 a.m.	#4	#4
9:10 a.m.	#3	#3
9:20 a.m.	#2	#2
9:30 a.m.	#1	#1
	<i>Teams 7, 8, 9</i>	<i>Teams 13, 14, 15</i>
12:20 p.m.	#5	#5
12:30 p.m.	#4	#4
12:40 p.m.	#3	#3
12:50 p.m.	#2	#2
1:00 p.m.	#1	#1
	<i>Teams 10, 11, 12</i>	<i>Teams 4, 5, 6</i>
1:10 p.m.	#5	<i>Individuals</i>
1:20 p.m.	#4	
1:30 p.m.	#3	
1:40 p.m.	#2	
1:50 p.m.	#1	
	<i>Teams 1, 2, 3</i>	

LAST TIME ON THE COURSE: The Notre Dame women's golf team ended its 2003-04 regular season by winning its second consecutive BIG EAST Championship (April 24-25). The Irish turned in rounds of 302, 293 - a Championship record for 18 holes – and a final-round 310 for a 54-hole mark of 41-over 905 to cruise to a 14-stroke victory over second-place Miami (306-308-305--919). Notre Dame also won the inaugural BIG EAST Women's Golf Championship over Miami in 2003. The Irish played host to the BIG EAST tournament at the par-72, 6,003-yard Warren Golf Course.

Individually, the Irish were led throughout by Nakazaki who fired scores of 75, two-under 70 - the lowest round in BIG EAST Championship history - and 77 for a 54-hole total of six-over par 222, which was good for third place and 2003-04 all-BIG EAST accolades.