

Introduction

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Notre Dame Sports Hotline

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Quick Facts

Notre Dame

Location Notre Dame, Ind. 46556
 Founded 1842
 Enrollment 8,275 (undergraduate), 11,417 (total)
 Nickname Fighting Irish
 Colors Gold and Blue
 School Fight Song Notre Dame Victory March
 Conference BIG EAST
 Home Field Melissa Cook Stadium (850)
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 Record at Notre Dame 251-114 (.687), 6 seasons
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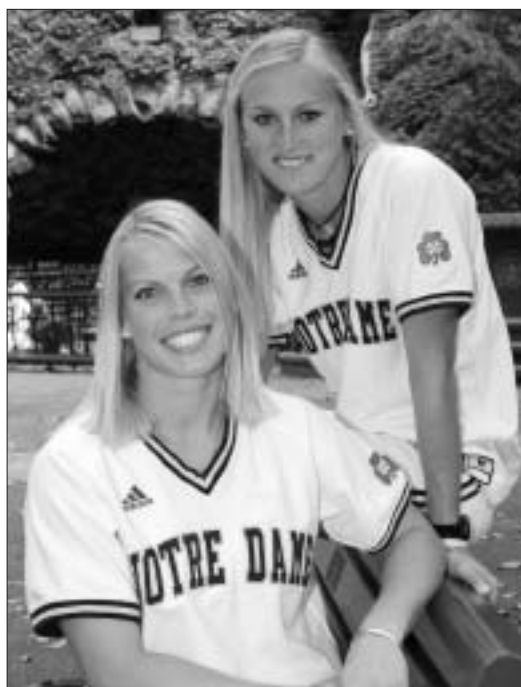
Requests to interview student-athletes and coaches must be arranged through the Sports Information office and should be made no less than 24 hours in advance.

Credits

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Notre Dame 2008 softball seniors (l-r): Katie Laing, Sarah Smith

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NOTRE DAME

ALL ABOUT THE IRISH

Junior Brittney Bargar is the latest installment in a long line of dominating pitchers to take the circle for the Irish.





Jarrah Myers was named softball's 2002 CoSIDA Academic All-American of the Year.

ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICANS

Notre Dame's softball team has been well represented on the CoSIDA Academic All-America teams since 1993, when Casey McMurray became the first Irish honoree. Since that season, a Notre Dame player has earned Academic All-America honors on 15 occasions, including four first-team selections. In 2002, Jarrah Myers was named college softball's Academic All-American of the Year.

Most recently, Stephanie Brown earned second team ESPN The Magazine Academic All-America honors following the 2006 and 2007 seasons. She graduated from the Mendoza College of Business with a 3.44 cumulative GPA as a marketing major. Heading into the 2007-08 season, Notre Dame was second among Division I schools with 193 academic All-Americans.

ALKIRE, MELANIE

One of the greatest Notre Dame sluggers set the single season home run mark in 2000. That mark of 13 was later tied by Jarrah Myers during the 2002 campaign. Alkire also has the single season mark for RBI (64) and slugging percentage (.665). The former shortstop still sits among the top-10 in virtually all of Notre Dame's career batting categories including hits (260), runs (129), batting average (.340), doubles (49), home runs (30), RBI (167) and walks (61).

ALL-AMERICANS

Notre Dame has seen 10 different players earn All-America honors from the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) since 1994: Stephanie Brown (2006), Melanie Alkire (2000),

Megan Ciolli (2004, 2005), Terri Kobata (1994, 1995), Jenny Kriech (2001), Andrea Loman (2002, 2003), Katie Marten (1995, 1996), Jarrah Myers (2001, 2002) Kristin Schmidt (2001) and Jennifer Sharron (2000, 2001).

ALL-TIME RECORD

Entering the 2008 season, Notre Dame softball has posted 763 wins in 19 seasons – just over 40 wins per year – having never finished a season with a win total less than 30. The Irish have won over two-thirds of their games and have never had a losing record as the team enters its 20th season of competitive softball. The program boasts an overall record of 763-360-2 (.679).

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Notre Dame was one of just three schools – joining Stanford and Duke – to rank among the top-20 in both the 2006 U.S. News & World Report Rankings of National Universities and the 2006-07 U.S. Sports Academy Directors' Cup all-sports competition, which measures across-the-board athletic excellence. The Irish ranked sixth in the Directors' Cup standings, which was the highest ranking the program has achieved. Notre Dame tied with Vanderbilt for the 18th spot in the U.S. News & World Report listing.

BIG EAST CONFERENCE

In Notre Dame's first season of BIG EAST Conference competition (1996) Liz Miller guided her team to the league's South Division title with a 19-1 record. When the Irish first joined the conference, they faced each divisional team in a pair of doubleheaders over the course of a two-day weekend. The formula changed in 1998, as the games were dropped to just a single doubleheader followed by a solo contest the next day. The conference adopted its current format in 1999, which pits each team in a single-day doubleheader.

Entering the 2008 season, Notre Dame is 192-31 (.861) in BIG EAST Conference regular-season competition. They finished the 1999 (16-0) and 2001 (20-0) conference schedules with perfect records and have claimed the regular-season title in 10 of the last 12 seasons.

Notre Dame broke through with its first BIG EAST Tournament title in 1999 led by Most Outstanding Player Jennifer Sharron. The Irish repeated in 2000, then fell to fourth in 2001 before claiming the title in 2002 and 2003. The 2003 team pounded out 21 runs during the tournament and earned the title on Andrea Loman's walk-off home run in the bottom of the ninth inning against Villanova. Loman would go on to earn the tournament's Most Outstanding Player award. The 2006 season produced the latest championship, as the Irish saddled the strong pitching of Most Outstanding Player Heather Booth to hoist the hardware. It was Notre Dame's fifth BIG EAST Tournament crown, and was followed by a runner-up finish in 2007. In all, Notre Dame has posted a record of 27-14 (.659) over the course of 12 league tournaments.

Notre Dame is one of only two BIG EAST teams that have won at least 18 league games in a single season. The Irish have accomplished the feat on three occasions since 2001, after first reaching the 18-win mark in 1996.

Notre Dame has seen an Irish team member earn the BIG EAST Conference's top player award on eight occasions. Melanie Alkire won the award in 1999 and 2000, followed by Lizzy Lemire (2001),

Jarrah Myers (2002), Andrea Loman (2003) and Megan Ciolli (2004). Meghan Murray also is a two-time honoree, winning the league's top award in 1996 and 1997.

Six players have earned the league's Pitcher of the Year award, five have garnered Rookie of the Year nods, and the coaching staff has been named tops in the conference on five occasions. All-BIG EAST accolades have been passed out to Irish players on 80 occasions since 1996.

BOOTH, HEATHER

One of the most durable pitchers to ever play at Notre Dame, Booth averaged 225.0 innings/season including a school-record 261.1 during the 2006 campaign. Booth ranks among the top-three pitchers on the all-time record list in seven single season categories (appearances, games started, wins, complete games, shutouts, innings pitched and strikeouts) and tops the Notre Dame career record books in appearances, games started, wins, complete games and innings pitched.

CAPTAINS

In the 19-year history of Irish softball, a total of 39 different student-athletes have served as team captains. Among that group, four athletes have served as multi-year captains. The two-time captains are Ruth Kmak (1990, 1992), Jennifer Sharron (2000-01), Danielle Klayman (2000-01), and Katie Laing (2007-08).

CIOLLI, MEGAN

One of the top players in program history, she concluded her career in 2005 with an NFCA All-American honor. She also was an ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District member in her final season. Ciolli was a four-time first-team all-BIG EAST selection – making her one of only four Irish softball players to gain the honor as many times – and was named the BIG EAST Player of the Year in 2004. A two-time NFCA third-team All-American and 2005 captain, Ciolli finds her name atop the all-time leaders in both career hits (284) and stolen bases (76).

DRAMATIC HOME RUNS

Notre Dame has had its fair share of dramatic home runs in its 19-year history – shots late in contests that have tied the game or put the Irish ahead on the scoreboard.

Liz Hartmann has been at the plate for many of those moments, as she hit come-from-behind home runs at Nebraska (2002), Louisiana-Lafayette (2003) and against Nebraska (2004) in the UNLV Classic.

Also noteworthy is Andrea Loman's ninth-inning blast against Villanova in the 2003 BIG EAST Tournament finale to clinch the championship title. In 2004, Stephanie Brown hit the game-tying moon shot to send the 2004 BIG EAST Tournament title game into extra innings. Then two years later, she delivered again with a two-run blast in the bottom of the seventh inning that enabled the Irish to shock No. 10 Arizona State, 3-2, during the Judi Garman Classic. Carissa Jaquish joined the group with a two-run home run at Syracuse in the 10th inning to give the Irish a 7-5 come-from-behind victory during the 2006 campaign. Even pitcher Brittney Bargar got in the action when her first career hit – a walk-off homer in the bottom of the seventh – proved to be the game winner during a 2007 matchup with Toledo.



Stephanie Brown picked up her fair share of hardware during her four-year career with Notre Dame, including both academic and athletic All-American awards.

FIFTY FOUR

The 2001 Irish softball team ended up posting a stellar 54-7 record, easily setting the mark for the most wins during one season in Notre Dame softball history. Liz Miller's last team posted a national-best 33-game win streak during the season and knocked off nine ranked teams along the way. The Irish stubbed their toe in the BIG EAST Tournament that year, but were awarded a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament for the first time in the program's history. During the year, Notre Dame achieved its highest-ever ranking, peaking at seventh in the USA Today/NFCA Top 25 poll.

FIGHTING IRISH

Exactly where and how Notre Dame's athletic nickname, "Fighting Irish," came to origination never has been perfectly explained. One story suggests the moniker was born in 1899 with Notre Dame leading Northwestern 5-0 at halftime of a football game in Evanston, Ill., the Wildcat fans supposedly began to chant, "Kill the Fighting Irish, kill the Fighting Irish," as the second half opened. Another tale has the nickname originating at halftime of the Notre Dame-Michigan football game in 1909. With his team trailing, one Notre Dame player yelled to his teammates – who happened to have names like Dolan, Kelly, Glynn, Duffy, and Ryan – "What's the matter with you guys? You're all Irish and you're not fighting worth a lick." Notre Dame came back to win the game and press, after overhearing the remark, reported the game as a victory for the "Fighting Irish." The most generally-accepted explanation is that the press coined the nickname as a characterization of Notre Dame athletic teams, their never-say-die fighting spirit and the Irish qualities of grit, determination, and tenacity. The term likely began

as an abusive expression tauntingly directed toward the athletes from the small, private, Catholic institution. Notre Dame alumnus Francis Wallace popularized it in his New York Daily News columns in the 1920s. The Notre Dame Scholastic, in a 1929 edition, printed its own version of the story: "The term 'Fighting Irish' has been applied to Notre Dame teams for years. It first attached itself years ago when the school, comparatively unknown, sent its athletic teams away to play in another city ... At that time the title 'Fighting Irish' held no glory or prestige ... The years passed swiftly and the school began to take a place in the sports world ... 'Fighting Irish' took on a new meaning. The unknown of a few years past has boldly taken a place among the leaders. The unkind appellation became symbolic of the struggle for supremacy of the field ... the term, while given in irony, has become our heritage ... So truly does it represent us that we are unwilling to part with it." Notre Dame competed under the nickname "Catholics" during the 1800s and became more widely known as the "Ramblers" during the early 1920s in the days of the Four Horsemen. University president Rev. Matthew Walsh, C.S.C., officially adopted "Fighting Irish" as the Notre Dame nickname in 1927.

GAMES PLAYED

Notre Dame set the school record for games played in a single season during the 2004 campaign, taking the field 69 times and compiling a 49-20 record to set the mark for the second-most wins in a single season.

Teammates Stephanie Brown, Meagan Ruthrauff, Sara Schoonaert and Nicole deFau all share the school record, as each player appeared and started in all of 2004's 69 contests.

The Irish have seen action in a total of 1,125 contests.

GOLD AND BLUE

The origin of Notre Dame's school colors can be traced back to the founding of the University in 1842. At that time, Notre Dame's original school colors were yellow and blue; yellow symbolized the light and blue represented the truth. However, sometime after the Dome and Statue of Mary atop the Main Building was gilded, gold and blue became the official colors of the University.

GOLDEN DOME

The Main Building surmounted by a statue of Our Lady atop the world-famous Golden Dome – actually gold leaf periodically replaced, most recently in 2005 – at one time comprised the entire University infrastructure, and in 1879 was rebuilt in five months after a devastating fire. The twelve Columbus murals in the main corridor were painted by Luigi Gregori, an Italian artist who spent 17 years at Notre Dame in the latter part of the 1800s. The building now contains the primary administrative offices, including that of Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., who took over in June of 2005 as Notre Dame's 17th president. The exterior of the

building was renovated and cleaned in 1996 and the interior of the building was renovated and reopened in August of 1999, after being closed the previous two academic years.

GUMPF, DEANNA

The third head coach in Notre Dame softball history, Deanna Gumpf served as the Irish pitching coach under Liz Miller for four seasons before taking over the program in the summer of 2001 after Miller's retirement. In her first season, Gumpf and her staff landed the BIG EAST Coaching Staff of the Year and the NFCA Midwest Region Coaching Staff of the Year awards while helping the Irish win the BIG EAST Tournament and advance to the final day of competition in their respective NCAA Tournament regional bracket.

Through six seasons at the helm of the program, Gumpf has led the team to four BIG EAST regular season championships, three BIG EAST Tournament titles and 251 wins. Her career winning percentage (.687) is the 17th best among active coaches.

INDOOR FACILITY

Although the weather is not always conducive to outside practice during the winter months in Northern Indiana, the Notre Dame softball team takes full advantage of the indoor batting and pitching facility adjacent to Frank Eck Stadium – the home of Notre Dame baseball. Donated by alumnus Frank Eck, the facility features wall-to-wall artificial turf, four full batting tunnels and a regulation clay pitching surface. To sharpen its defensive skills during the winter months, Notre Dame heads to the Loftus Sports Center, which features a full Prestige Turf football field.

IVY FIELD

Once the home of the Fighting Irish, Ivy Field was the place to be for every Notre Dame home game since the program began in 1989. It played host to the BIG EAST Tournament in 1998 and 2006, and Notre Dame posted a 284-48-2 (.853) mark within its friendly confines.

Facility-bests include 24 wins in 1996 and a perfect 18-0 mark at home in 2001.

HOME RUN POWER

Notre Dame exploded for a team-record 54 home runs during the 2002 season, shattering the previous record of 36 in 2000. Jarrah Myers ended up with a single-season-record 13 round trippers, followed by Andrea Loman (11), Andria Bledsoe (7) and Liz Hartmann (7). Hartmann's total was the most-ever by a freshman at Notre Dame until Stephanie Brown notched as many during her rookie campaign in 2004. In all, 10 different Irish players hit at least one home run during the 2002 season.

The Irish threatened the record once again in 2003, cranking 49 balls out of the park. Eight players hit three or more home runs, led by Loman and Hartmann with nine apiece.

Notre Dame also started on a torrid pace with the home run ball in 2004, ending up hitting 39 dingers in 69 games. The Irish again flexed their muscle in 2006 by hitting 44 home runs with Meagan Ruthrauff ending the season with 12 home runs.

HAYES, SARA

The premier hitter for the Irish in the early 1990s, Sara Hayes' name appears all over the

Notre Dame career offensive record book. She ranks in the top five for doubles (44), triples (11), home runs (26), RBI (137), walks (66) and putouts (964). Hayes was named the Midwestern Collegiate Conference's Player of the Year in 1995 and was a three-time first-team all-conference pick.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

The Notre Dame softball team has enjoyed three memorable international trips over the past several years. Prior the 2000 season, the team spent its fall break in Australia, while the 2004 team ended up in Ireland and England for several days in October of 2003.

While in Europe the Irish had a chance to develop softball at the grassroots level, as the team spent time in Dublin and London during its trip, offering clinics to local softball players.

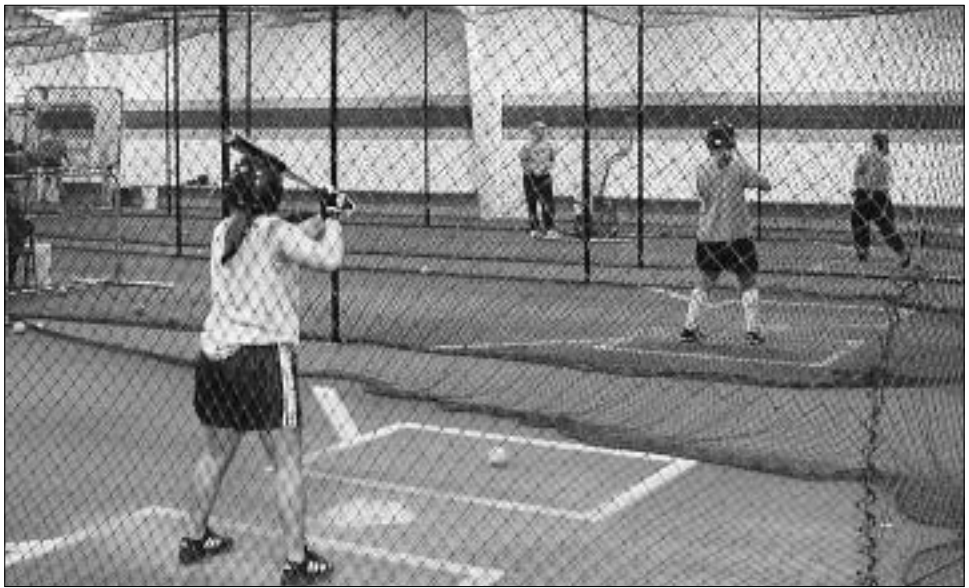
Gumpf's 2008 squad trekked through Italy this past October, including stops in Rome, Florence and Venice. Upon leaving Venice, the team traveled to the town of Forli (near San Marino) where they competed against a compilation of players from Italy's professional softball league and members of the Italian national team.

KOBATA, TERRI

One of the most dominant pitchers in all of college softball in the early 1990's, Terri Kobata became Notre Dame's first softball All-American by claiming the honor in 1994. She ended her career with 42 shutouts, an overall record of 79-15 (.840), 907 strikeouts, 285 hits allowed, and a miniscule 0.63 ERA. Kobata's legacy also is highlighted by 15 career no-hitters – 14 of which were solo – which helps make her one of the greatest hurlers in Notre Dame history.

LOMAN, ANDREA

It would be a difficult challenge to proclaim who the greatest player in Notre Dame softball history may be, but 2003 graduate Andrea Loman would be one of the first players brought up in the conversation. Loman compiled one of the greatest careers in Irish history from 2000-03, claiming two All-America honors along with the BIG EAST Player of the Year, BIG EAST Championship's Most Outstanding Player and BIG EAST Rookie of the Year trophies.



The indoor facility located on campus has proven to be an invaluable resource to the Notre Dame softball program since its opening in January of 2000.

Loman's presence in the Irish record book speaks for itself, as the Riverside, Calif., native stands first in career runs (164), second in walks (87) and home runs (31), fourth in RBI (148) and fifth in batting average (.347), doubles (44) and fielding percentage (.977). In 2003, Loman led the Irish in batting average (.402), runs (43), hits (68), doubles (12), home runs (9), RBI (42), total bases (111), slugging percentage (.657), on-base percentage (.466) and stolen bases (18).

MELISSA COOK STADIUM

A 1993 Notre Dame graduate and softball letterwinner, Melissa Cook was the first former player to pass away when she left us in 2002 – but her legend and spirit continue to thrive at the University.

She will always be remembered at Ivy Field, as head coach Deanna Gumpf – along with the 2003 Irish team and Cook's family – dedicated a bench at the facility to the former second baseman and shortstop during the team's fall alumni game scrimmage.

Then in the summer of 2006 Cook's parents – Linda and Paul Demo – made a generous donation to the Notre Dame softball team to help defray the costs of construction for a new softball stadium in Melissa's memory. The Melissa Cook Stadium, a \$4.8 million facility, is located on the southeast corner of the Notre Dame campus near Eck Baseball Stadium, and will host all of Notre Dame's home contests beginning in the spring of 2008.

MIDWESTERN COLLEGIATE CONFERENCE

Notre Dame competed in the Midwestern Collegiate Conference – now called the Horizon League – from 1989 through 1995 before Notre Dame joined the BIG EAST Conference. The Irish racked up a record of 66-15 (.815) in MCC regular season play and won the league tournament titles in five of its seven years of membership. Notre Dame's first coach, Brian Boulac, was named MCC Coach of the Year in 1989 while Liz Miller landed the same honor in 1994 and 1995.

MILLER, LIZ

The architect of Notre Dame softball's rise to prominence, Liz Miller coached the Irish for nine seasons (1993-2001) and led the team to six NCAA

Tournament appearances. Miller posted an outstanding 377-156 (.707) record at Notre Dame, which was the final coaching stop of her stellar career. She was named to the NFCA Hall of Fame in the fall of 2005. Among her career highlights, Miller implemented the women's athletic program at Lake Michigan College and compiled 1,047-331 overall combined record while coaching volleyball, basketball and softball at the school. After narrowing her focus solely on softball she amassed 12 conference championships and 11 regional titles for Lake Michigan.

Miller received an honorary monogram from the University of Notre Dame upon her retirement at the end of the 2001 season. She and her husband, Lloyd, who also played a large part in the development of the Notre Dame program while Liz was head coach, are still very close to the program and to this day attend many of the team's games both at home and on the road.

Miller ended her softball coaching career with 918 career victories in 26 seasons, winning more than 75 percent of the games she coached.

MONOGRAM CLUB

The Notre Dame Monogram Club is comprised of some 4,300 dues-paying individuals who have earned the University's varsity athletic insignia for their athletic or team support endeavors or have been honorary monogram recipients. The club supports the primary goal of the University: the spiritual, intellectual, and physical development of its students and alumni. By providing its members the opportunity to foster and maintain relationships across different sports, generations and geographical locations, the Monogram Club aspires to contribute – through the common bond of sport – to the social and professional enrichment of its members while providing a means for ongoing association with the University. As an integral part of the Notre Dame family, the Monogram Club endeavors to uphold and enrich the great tradition of Notre Dame athletics.

MYERS, JARRAH

Possibly the greatest power hitter to ever don the blue and gold, Myers completed her career in 2002 with a trunk full of awards. In 2002 alone, she



Seniors Sarah Smith and Katie Laing led Notre Dame across Italy during its fall break trip in 2007.



Juniors Linda Kohan (left) and Brittany Bargar hope to continue the Irish legacy this season by guiding the squad to its 10th consecutive NCAA Tournament.

was named the BIG EAST Player of the Year, the BIG EAST Scholar-Athlete of the Year, first-team CoSIDA Academic All-American, third-team NFCA/Louisville Slugger All-American, CoSIDA Academic All-American of the Year for softball, and earned the Notre Dame Monogram Club Team MVP. Even more, she took home Notre Dame's Knute Rockne Scholar-Athlete Award and became the fourth Notre Dame softball player to land the school's prestigious Byron V. Kanaley Award.

Myers sits atop the Irish career lists in home runs (36), RBI (174) and putouts (1,337). Myers is also third in walks (76), sixth in stolen bases (43) and ninth (.976) in fielding percentage.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

The Notre Dame softball team has appeared in the NCAA Tournament 12 times overall including visits in each of the last nine seasons. The Irish have reached the final day of regional competition five times before being eliminated by Michigan (1995 and 2003), Iowa (2001), Nebraska (2002) and Northwestern (2005 and 2006). Although Notre Dame has made 12 different trips to the show, they have only visited four different post-season sites (Bloomington, Ind. – 1994; Ann Arbor, Mich. – 1995-96, 1999-2000, 2003-04; Iowa City, Iowa – 2001-02; Evanston, Ill. – 2006-07).

The Irish served as a tournament host to regional competition in 2005, tacking on a 2-2 record during play at Ivy Field.

UNITED STATES NATIONAL TEAMS

Four Irish players have made their presence felt on the United States National Team over the past several years. Jarrah Myers, Lizzy Lemire and Jennifer Sharron became the first Notre Dame players to earn a spot on the U.S. National Team, doing so in the summer of 2001. Lemire played on the USA Red team, which competed in the 2001 U.S. Cup. Myers and Sharron landed on USA Blue, which traveled to Maracay, Venezuela, for the Pan Am Qualifier. USA Blue dominated the tournament, not allowing a single run to any of the competing teams. Sharron even tossed a perfect game for USA Blue in their battle with Brazil.

Mallorie Lenn earned a spot on the U.S. Junior National team in



Staci Alford (1990-93) threw the first ever no-hitter for Notre Dame on April 5, 1990.

Hermasillo, Mexico, for the first Pan American championship team during the summer of 2002. Lenn was a key member of the gold-medal winning U.S. team, providing the game-winning RBI in its final round-robin game and was behind the plate for the tournament's final contest, which the United States won against Canada.

Alexis Madrid competed as a member of the Puerto Rican National Fastpitch team during the summer of 2002.

In 2006 Linda Kohan earned an invitation to join the Israeli National team, but declined the offer.

NATIONAL PRO FASTPITCH

National Pro Fastpitch, a six-team professional softball league, began competition in the summer of 2005. Megan Ciolli, who played for the Chicago Bandits, represented Notre Dame during the league's inaugural season. She made her alma mater proud by batting .241, adding eight RBI, eight stolen bases, and a homer.

NO-HITTERS

There have been 34 no-hitters thrown in Notre Dame softball history, including a pair last season.

Brittney Bargar and Kenya Fuemmeler made history against Ball State (April 18) by joining forces to throw a combined no-hitter, the seventh dual effort by Notre Dame pitchers. It was also the second no-no for both Bargar and Fuemmeler. Bargar later blanked Loyola (Chicago) in the hit column on May 1.

Terri Kobata ended her career as the queen of no-hitters at Notre Dame, with 15 no-hitters on her resume.

ONE OF THE BEST

The NFCA announced the USA Today/NFCA All-Time Top 50 during the fall of 2003 and Notre Dame ranks among the top softball programs in the nation. The Irish were tagged with the poll's 32nd spot.

Based on the weekly national rankings from the 1995 until the end of the 2003 slate, the poll was led by Arizona, followed by UCLA and Washington.

RANKED TEAMS

The Irish have a tendency to pull off the upset and defeat a ranked opponent on an annual basis. In every season dating back to 1994 – with the exception of the 2003 campaign – Notre Dame has downed at least one team that was in the top-25. Overall, Notre Dame has 46 wins over 26 ranked opponents. Among some of the higher ranked programs the Irish have knocked off over the years are Washington (#4), Nebraska (#4), Michigan (#5), Tennessee (#5), Oklahoma (#6), Fresno State (#7), Florida State (#9) and Arizona State (#10).

RECORD BREAKERS

Since Deanna Gumpf assumed control of the program for the 2002 season, the Irish have continued to match or eclipse several single-season records.

The 2002 team set school records for home runs (54) and runs scored (318). The 2003 edition set the school mark (at the time) for fielding percentage (.971). In 2004, the Irish established the record number of double plays (22), games played (69) and complete games pitched (52). One year later, Notre Dame set the school records for strikeouts thrown (527), strikeouts per seven innings (8.74) and attempted steals (134). The

2006 version of the Blue and Gold holds the school record for single-season walks (144) and fielding percentage (.977).

ROAD WARRIORS

During the program's second complete varsity season in 1990, Notre Dame began to hit the road and take part in what has become a stapled tradition in collegiate softball – the early season, warm-weathered tournaments. The Irish are one of the many softball programs that annually seek the top competition in the top tournaments slated for the season's first several weeks. In fact, Notre Dame will begin the 2008 campaign with an opening-day doubleheader in Arizona State's Kajikawa Classic that features Utah and defending national champion Arizona.

Notre Dame has traveled to 32 destinations in 16 different states for early-season tournaments since 1990.

RUTHRAUFF, MEAGAN

Over a historical four-year career with the Irish, Meagan Ruthrauff established herself as one of the most productive hitters to play under the Golden Dome. Ruthrauff set a new standard for single-game offensive production during a 2006 meeting with Pittsburgh as she clubbed a team-record three home runs on her way to knocking in a school-record seven runs against the Panthers. The former first baseman and designated player is the all-time Notre Dame single-season leader in walks (36) and ranks second in single-season home runs (12), RBI (54) and on-base percentage (.477). Ruthrauff is the career leader in games played (247), doubles (49) and walks (112).

SHARRON, JENNIFER

Jennifer Sharron graduated from Notre Dame in 2001 but left her mark in the circle as a storied pitcher. The only lefthander to ever throw from the circle for Notre Dame, Sharron sits among the all-time leaders in wins (88), complete games (76) and innings pitched (772.1). She became the first BIG EAST player to win four consecutive conference pitcher-of-the-year awards (1998-2001) and earned first-team all-conference honors four consecutive times.

STENGLEIN, STEFFANY

One of the greatest strikeout pitchers the Irish has produced, Stenglein ranks among the best for single-season strikeouts (310), innings pitched (250.2), and wins (27). She also finished her career in 2005 ranking among the top-three in appearances (154), games started (132), wins (79) and innings pitched (744.0). Stenglein was also a three-time all-BIG EAST first-team selection and a two-time conference pitcher-of-the-year.

SEVEN FIRST-TEAMERS

Notre Dame has improved its school record for first-team all-BIG EAST honorees three times in the last five seasons. The 2001, 2002 and 2004 teams included a record seven first-team award winners: 2004 – Steffany Stenglein, Heather Booth, Mallorie Lenn, Liz Hartmann, Stephanie Brown, Megan Ciolli and Nicole deFau; 2003 – Andria Bledsoe, Ciolli, Andrea Loman, Lisa Mattison,



No other southpaw left their mark on the Irish program quite like pitcher Jennifer Sharron.

Stenglein, Jarrah Myers and Jenny Kriech; 2001 – Loman, Mattison, Kriech, Melanie Alkire, Lizzy Lemire, Jennifer Sharron and Kristin Schmidt.

VICTORY MARCH

The most recognizable collegiate fight song in the nation, the "Notre Dame Victory March" was written in the early 1900s by two brothers who were University of Notre Dame graduates. Michael Shea, a 1905 graduate, composed the music while his brother, John Shea, who earned degrees in 1906 and 1908, provided the corresponding lyrics. The song was copyrighted in 1908 and a piano version, complete with lyrics, was published that year. Michael, who became a priest in Ossining, N.Y., collaborated on the project with John, who lived in Holyoke, Mass., the song's public debut came in the winter of 1908 when Michael played it on the organ of the Second Congregational Church in Holyoke. The Shea brothers later presented the "Notre Dame Victory March" to the University, and it first appeared under the copyright of the University of Notre Dame in 1928. The copyright for the beginning of the song still is in effect. The more well-known second verse, which begins with the words "Cheer, cheer for Old Notre Dame," now is in the public domain in the United States (for both the music and lyrics) – but the second verse remains protected in all territories outside of the country. Notre Dame's fight song first was performed at Notre Dame on Easter Sunday, 1909, in the rotunda of the Main Building when the Notre Dame band performed the Victory March as part of its traditional Easter morning concert. It was first heard at a Notre Dame athletic event 10 years later. In 1969, as college football celebrated its centennial, the "Notre Dame Victory March" was honored as the "greatest of all fight songs." Michael Shea was pastor of St. Augustine's Church in Ossining until his death in 1938. John Shea, a baseball monogram winner at Notre Dame, became a Massachusetts state senator and lived in Holyoke until his death in 1965.

The original lyrics, written when all athletes at Notre Dame were male, refer to "sons," but in recognition of the fact that the Victory March is now played for athletic teams composed of men and women, many modify the words accordingly. The "Victory March" earned a number-one ranking in ratings compiled in 1998 in a book, "College Fight Songs: An Annotated Anthology." The "Victory March" was also the No. 1-ranked fight song in a 1990 survey conducted by Bill Studwell, a librarian at Northern Illinois University.

*Rally sons of Notre Dame:
Sing her glory and sound her fame,
Raise her Gold and Blue
And cheer with voices true:
Rah, rah, for Notre Dame*

*We will fight in ev-ry game,
Strong of heart and true to her name
We will ne'er forget her
And will cheer her ever
Loyal to Notre Dame*

*Cheer, cheer for old Notre Dame,
Wake up the echoes cheering her name,
Send a volley cheer on high,
Shake down the thunder from the sky.
What though the odds be great or small
Old Notre Dame will win over all,
While her loyal sons are marching
Onward to victory.*

WEBSITE

Notre Dame athletics maintains its presence in cyberspace with its own Internet site, und.com, operated in conjunction with College Sports Television (CSTV) in Carlsbad, Calif. The site features media guide material, press releases, event recaps, match and statistical information, links to live broadcasts and live "in-game" statistics, and photos covering each of Notre Dame's 26 varsity teams. From Aug. 2002-July 2005, und.com featured over one million page views in 36 consecutive months, finishing each academic year with over 35 million (including 47.8 million page views in 2003-04). In Sept. 2002, the site became the first in CSTV history to attract more than five million page views in a month. It then plowed over six million in November 2003 and hit the seven million mark in a month for the first time in September 2004.

WOMEN'S ATHLETICS

Notre Dame Celebrated 35 years of women's athletics during the weekend of April 27-29 (2007) with the Monogram Club serving as the primary sponsor and organizer of the historic event. More than 100 former Notre Dame women's athletes attending the weekend celebration, which included a Friday-night dinner at the home of athletics director Kevin White; athletic events on Saturday; sports-specific social events; and the concluding Mass and Sunday brunch that were held in the Joyce Center Arena. The Mass took on added significance for those in attendance, as current University president Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., was joined by his predecessors – Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., and Rev. Edward "Monk" Malloy, C.S.C. – as the celebrants.