

Unraveling the Notre Dame mystique

The defense rests.

I said it in the preseason. I say it now. I'll say it on New Year's Day when Miami battles for the national championship. Notre Dame is not all it's cracked up to be.

The Fightin' Irish have emerged as college football's equivalent to yesterday's Dallas Cowboys and 1990's San Francisco 49ers - translated as those who pull off miracle wins (in other words, luck) while in the face of certain defeat. There is no doubt that Notre Dame should be 1-3. But as it is, the Irish are 3-1.

It is comforting to know that the Irish are not the number one team in the country. Never should have been. A 36-31 loss to Stanford in South Bend last Saturday toppled Notre Dame from the top ranks of college football. This game was nearly no different than the Irish's two last-gasp victories over Michigan and Michigan State. Still unproven quarterback Rick Mirer lofts a desperation toss into the end zone on the game's final play. The ball falls inches from the receiver's outstretched hands, and just like that, Stanford rips Notre Dame's four leaf clover to shreds.

Think about that for a second. Stanford. This is not Miami, Tennessee or Southern Cal, all of whom Notre Dame must contend with later this season, in what appears to be the Irish's diminishing hopes for a national title. But - Notre Dame is to most sportswriters what Sugar Ray Leonard is to most boxing judges. Who knows, at 7-4, Notre Dame could catapult themselves into the Orange Bowl. As ridiculous as that sounds, with the help of a few influential wordprocessors, it could happen. Stranger unexplainable things have happened in sports. Leonard won a decision over Hagler. Mike Tyson was winning on points when Buster Douglas knocked him silly. Michael Jordan has won only one MVP award.

What it all boils down to, is that there's this strange Notre Dame mystique that hangs over college football like some big, green cloud. A mystique that

Chip Lupo



enables a would-be steroid scandal to be swept under the rug and forgotten, allegations that would have spelled doom for Miami or Florida State. A mystique that enables such NFL superstars as Tim Brown to walk away with the Heisman. A mystique that pours unnecessary hype on mediocre quarterbacks such as Tony Rice.

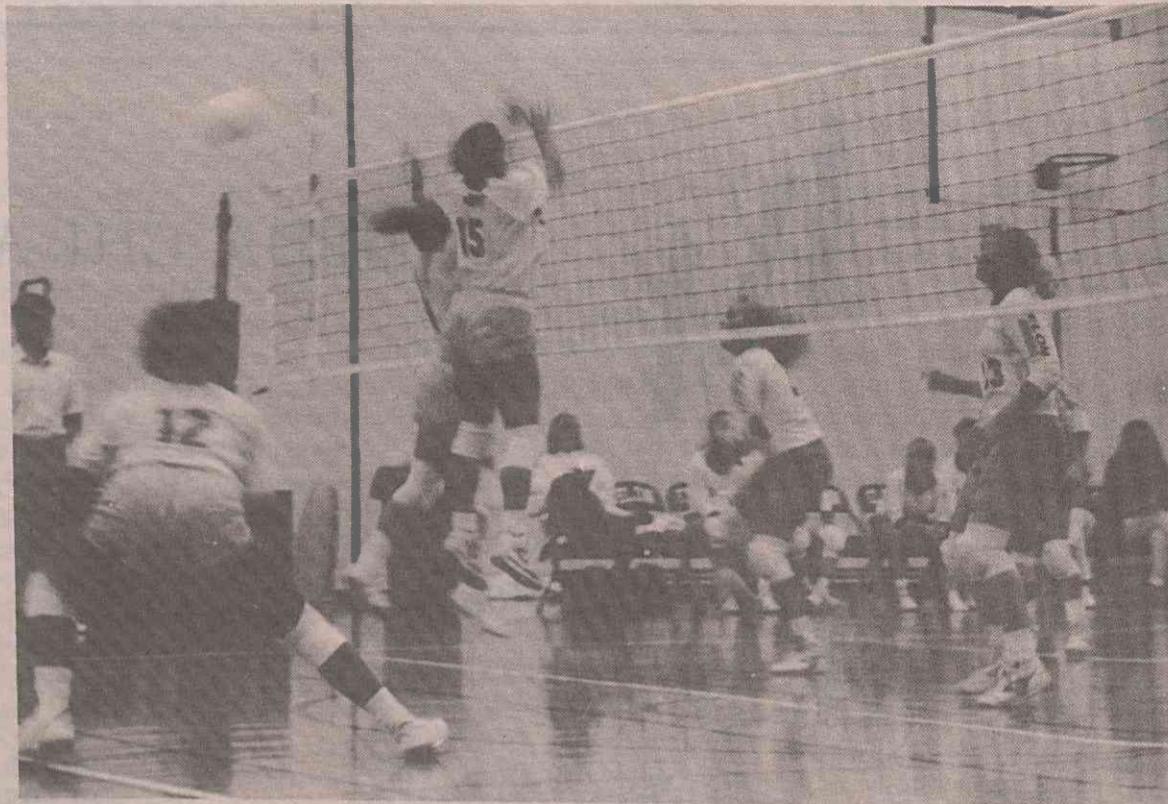
As I'm sure you're all aware of by now, in Columbia, Missouri last Saturday, Colorado was accidentally (Yeah, right) granted an extra down in the closing seconds of their game against Missouri. The extra down was all they needed to score a last second touchdown and walk away with the victory.

I'm wondering if the folks in South Bend are incensed. Well, they should be. Their rationale? "Hey, we're from Notre Dame. We should have been awarded an extra down, too."

EXTRA POINT: One of the most bitter, hard fought rivalries in college football, or maybe even in all of sports, comes to an end on October 20. It has come to my attention that Notre Dame has decided to cancel its annual war with Miami after the 1990 season. The reason - and I'm not making this up, either - is that Miami does not have the educational standards of Notre Dame.

I wonder if the real reason is that the Irish are tired of getting humiliated by the Hurricanes on the gridiron, as evidenced by last year's 27-10 thumping in the Orange Bowl. Does this mean, on New Year's Day 1997, if the unbeaten Irish should face the unbeaten Hurricanes in the \$30 million Federal Express Orange Bowl, for the national championship, that Notre Dame would decline the invitation? Please.

Since Notre Dame is all of a
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Heather Whitehouse/The Pendulum

The Fightin' Christians women's volleyball team battles Lenoir-Rhyne in a crucial SAC-8 matchup in Alumni Gym. The Lady Christians have home matches with Mars Hill on October 13 and St. Andrews on October 15.

Elon captures first SAC-8 win Christians upset No. 10 Mars Hill, 13-7

Ted Toomer
The Pendulum

Elon enjoyed their second victory of the season and their first conference win against the 10th ranked Lions of Mars Hill 13-7 in Meares Stadium last Saturday.

"I told Heath (Hewett) before the game, either we'd win or lose badly," said quarterback Kelly Holder. Holder played a key role in the Christians' victory, completing 21 of 31 passes for 161 yards to lead the way for the Christians offense.

Consistent passing by Holder coupled with the running of Bobby Johnson, who turned in his second one hundred yard game with 117 yards on 27 carries, was a key factor in a critical early third quarter drive. The Christians drove 56 yards and capped the drive with a third and goal pass from Holder to tight end David Barr which proved to be the final nail in the Lions coffin and ensured an Elon victory.

"At half time we knew that it was the first time that the offense and defense had played well together," Holder said. "We knew that if we kept it up in the second half we would win"

Holder, starting in place of

This Week

Opponent: Presbyterian
Game Time: 2 p.m.
Location: Memorial Stadium
Elon's Record: 2-4
Opponent's Record: 0-5
Elon Last Week: Defeated Mars Hill, 13-7

injured quarterback Heath Hewett, has accounted for two of the three wins Elon has enjoyed in the last two seasons.

The Lions were averaging 28 points a game until last Saturday. Mars Hill scored easily on their first drive but that was the only points a stingy Elon defense would allow. Captain Jack Duval and defensive end Tim Woodle led the Christian defense, which held Mars Hill to 21 points under their season average.

"After their opening drive, the defensive front and linebackers did a much better job controlling the line of scrimmage, and we played better football the rest of the game," said Christian defensive coordinator Larry Stevens.

Elon is now set to return to Burlington Memorial Stadium on

Saturday for Parent's Weekend, where the Christians will host a winless Presbyterian team.

"They were successful moving the ball last year," Stevens said. "We plan to do a much better job on Saturday." Presbyterian head coach Elliot Poss is looking forward to Saturday's game against the Christians.

"We need a win and we know it's going to be a battle. Elon has improved a great deal from last year," said Poss. "One of our top priorities will be to stop the running game and control Johnson. We will also need to stop the passing game by putting pressure on their quarterback."

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