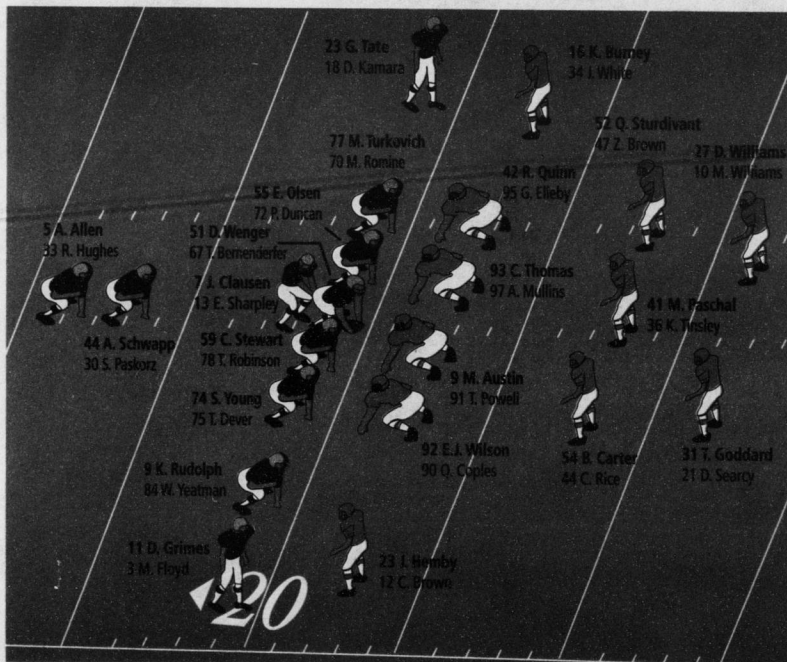


WHEN NOTRE DAME HAS THE BALL



SCOUTING REPORT

Clausen starting to fulfill expectations



JIMMY CLAUSEN
HEIGHT: 6'3"
WEIGHT: 217
SOPHOMORE
QUARTERBACK

BY DAVID REYNOLDS
ASSISTANT SPORTSATURDAY EDITOR

All Jimmy Clausen needed was some time.

After spending most of his first year on the ground after sacks and recuperating in the training room, the top-rated quarterback from the 2007 recruiting class has reminded fans just what makes him so special.

The sophomore has thrown for 1,248 yards and 12 touchdowns in only five games, a marked improvement from last year's season totals of 1,254 yards and seven TDs.

One reason for the upward trend in Clausen's passing numbers? Try the play of the Irish's revamped offensive line. The unit has given Clausen time to scan the field for his receivers this season, having allowed a mere five sacks in the Notre Dame's first five contests of the season. The maligned group surrendered an NCAA-record 58 sacks last season, with Clausen absorbing 34 of those.

The better protection this season has allowed Clausen to blossom into a star. His completion percentage has eclipsed 60 percent. His quarterback rating has jumped to almost 140, and most importantly, he has begun to post Ws for Notre Dame.

The Irish have already surpassed their win total from 2007's 3-9 effort.

The strong start this season has helped Clausen and the Irish stop being the butt of many college football jokes.

He's still a long way from matching former Notre Dame quarterback greats Joe Montana, Joe Theismann and Brady Quinn. But he has been impressive in shaking off a forgettable rookie campaign and establishing himself as a premier quarterback in the Football Bowl Subdivision.

Clausen arrives in Chapel Hill coming off the best game of his college career, in which he threw for 347 yards and three touchdowns in a win against Stanford.

He comes from a family that has a pedigree for producing quarterbacks. His older brothers Casey and Rick both played for Tennessee, but Jimmy might be the best of the bunch. Coming out of high school, Sports Illustrated called Clausen a "once-in-a-generation talent as a passer," and, looking at his high school numbers, that bold claim might not be far from the truth.

He passed for 10,764 yards and a state-record 146 touchdowns in his prep career, never missing a start on the way. His cannon arm and pinpoint accuracy made coaches salivate around the country, and he piled up scholarship offers.

Once Clausen decided to enroll at Notre Dame, he wasted no time making his mark. He gained the starting spot in only the second game of the season but struggled with injuries most of the year because of the high number of hits he took behind center.

But this season he's regained his health and has returned to form.

His play will be key in what should be a battle of strengths between the two teams. North Carolina represents the toughest pass defense Clausen and the Irish's aerial attack have seen this season, while the Irish should be the best passing offense UNC faces all year.

Interceptions have been the Achilles' heel for the Irish signal-caller, who has thrown six. He will have his hands full against the ball-hawking defense of the Tar Heels, who lead the nation with 12 picks.

Clausen will pose a deep threat for the Tar Heels' secondary, which means UNC's corners and safeties will need to be at their best to contain his top targets, Golden Tate and Michael Floyd. Each brings a big-play dimension, and, if given the time, Clausen is accurate enough to expose any separation between defender and receiver.

Look for the Tar Heels to blitz early and often to try to rattle Clausen and keep him from picking apart the secondary.

SCHEDULE

SEPT. 6 vs. San Diego St.
SEPT. 13 vs. Michigan
SEPT. 20 at Michigan St.
SEPT. 27 vs. Purdue
OCT. 4 vs. Stanford
TODAY at North Carolina
OCT. 25 at Washington
NOV. 1 vs. Pittsburgh
NOV. 8 at Boston College
NOV. 15 vs. Navy
NOV. 22 vs. Syracuse
NOV. 29 at USC

KEEP IN MIND

The last time the Irish played at UNC, in 1975, then-unheralded Joe Montana led them to a fourth-quarter comeback win.

SPECIAL TEAMS

PUNTER: Eric Maust
KICKER: Ryan Burkhardt
PUNT RTN: Armando Allen
KICK RTN: Armando Allen

NOTRE DAME

NO.	NAME	POS.	YR.
1	Deion Walker	WR	Fr.
3	Michael Floyd	WR	Fr.
4	Gary Gray	CB	So.
5	Allen Armando Jr.	HB	So.
6	Ray Herring	S	Sr.
7	Jimmy Clausen	QB	So.
8	Raeshon McNeil	CB	Jr.
9	Ethan Johnson	DE	Fr.
9	Kyle Rudolph	TE	Fr.
10	Dayne Crist	QB	Fr.
11	David Grimes	WR	Sr.
12	Nick Lezynski	QB	So.
12	Robert Blanton	CB	Fr.
13	Evan Sharpley	QB	Sr.
14	Brandon Walker	K	So.
15	Brian Castello	QB	So.
16	Nate Montana	QB	Fr.
18	Duval Kamara	WR	So.
29	George West Jr.	WR	Jr.
20	Terrill Lambert	CB	Sr.
21	Barry Gallup Jr.	HB	Jr.
22	Harrison Smith	S	So.
23	Golden Tate	WR	So.
24	Leonard Gordon	CB	Jr.
25	Jonas Gray	HB	Fr.
26	Jamoris Slaughter	CB	Fr.
27	David Bruton	S	Sr.
28	Kyle McCarthy	S	Sr.
30	Steve Paskorz	FB	So.
31	Sergio Brown	S	Jr.
32	Luke Schmidt	FB/TE	Jr.
33	Robert Hughes	HB	So.
34	James Aldridge	HB	Jr.
35	Kevin Smith	LB	Fr.
36	David Posluszny	LB	Sr.
37	Mike Anello	CB	Sr.
38	Chris Bathon	S	Jr.
38	Christopher Gurriss	WR	So.
39	Ryan Burkhardt	K	Jr.
40	Maurice Crum Jr.	LB	Fr.
41	Scott Smith	LB	Sr.
41	Nikolas Rodriguez	HB	So.
42	Kevin Washington	LB	Fr.
42	Dan Franco	WR	Jr.
43	John Leonis	CB	Fr.
43	Eric Maust	P	Jr.
44	Asaph Schwapp	FB	Sr.
45	Darius Fleming	LB	Fr.
45	Kris Patterson	WR	Sr.
46	Steve Filer	LB	Fr.
47	Mike Narvaez	FB	Jr.
48	Steve Quinn	LB	Sr.
49	Toryan Smith	LB	Jr.
51	Dan Wenger	C	Jr.
52	Braxton Cave	C	Fr.
53	Morrice Richardson	DE	Jr.
54	Anthony McDonald	LB	Jr.
55	Eric Olsen	OG	Jr.
56	Kerry Neal	LB	So.
57	Mike Golic Jr.	C	Fr.
58	Brian Smith	LB	Fr.
59	Chris Stewart	OG	Jr.
61	Martin Quintana	LB	So.
62	Bill Flavin	OT	So.
63	Jeff Tisak	OT	So.
64	Tom Burke	LB	Fr.
65	Mike Hernandez	OL	Fr.
67	Thomas Bemenderter	C	Fr.
69	Carl Brophy	OL	Fr.
70	Matt Romine	OT	So.
71	Dennis Mahoney	OL	Fr.
72	Paul Duncan	OT	Fr.
74	Sam Young	OT	Fr.
75	Taylor Denver	OT	Jr.
75	Lane Clelland	OT	So.
76	Andrew Nuss	DE	Fr.
77	Michael Turkovich	OG	Fr.
78	Trevor Robinson	OG	Fr.
79	Hafis Williams	OG	Fr.
81	John Goodman	WR	Fr.
82	Robby Parris	WR	Fr.
83	Mike Ragone	TE	So.
84	Will Yeatman	TE	So.
85	Sam Vos	WR	Jr.
86	Paul Kuppich	TE	Fr.
87	Joseph Fauria	TE	Fr.
89	Kapron Lewis-Moore	DE	Fr.
90	John Ryan	LB	Jr.
91	Emeka Nwankwo	DE	So.
93	Paddy Mullen	DE	Jr.
94	Justin Brown	DE	Sr.
95	Ian Williams	DE	So.
96	Pat Kuntz	DE	Sr.
97	Kallen Wade	LB	Jr.
98	Sean Cwynar	DE	Fr.
99	Brandon Newman	DL	Fr.