

NOTRE DAME FIGHTING IRISH



OL Zack Martin

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2011

QUARTERBACKS - Brady Quinn left after '06 as ND's career passing leader (#1DC). With a veteran offense in '06 he threw for 3,426 (62%, 37-7). In '07 Jimmy Clausen (PS#5) became the 8th Irish frosh to start at QB S/51. He threw for just 1,254 (56%, 7-6) but improved each year and as a junior threw for 3,722 (68%, 28-4) before leaving for the NFL (#2DC) when HC Weis was fired (#2DC). RFr Dayne Crist (PS#5) was Clausen's bkp in '09 before a torn ACL vs Wash St and his 20 att was the unit's only exp that Kelly had to work with coming into LY. Crist was inj'd on a td run on the game opening drive vs Mich and true frosh Tommy Rees was 0-2 with 1 int. Nate Montana hit 8-17-104 but the team scored 0 td's on 8 drives without Crist and was much more effective when he ret'd. Even though Crist's 4 rush td's were the most in a season by an Irish QB since Jarious Jackson (7 '99), Kelly was reluctant to call planned runs (a staple in the spread) due to the lack of exp behind Crist and his lack of mobility. Crist was having a fine season (2,033, 59.2%, 15-7) when he was OFY early 1Q vs Tulsa. Rees hit 33-54 and became the first ND frosh to have 4 td's in a game while in relief vs the Golden Hurricane. Rees would go a perfect 4-0 as a starting QB (1,106, 61%, 12-8). Two QB's topped 1,000 yards for the first time S/83 as Rees avg 205 ypg in the L/5 games while Crist had 254 ypg in his 1st 8 starts. TY added to the mix as Kelly recruits Andrew Hendrix (rFr, PS#12) who was impressive on the scout team and true frosh Everett Golson (PS#20). Kelly (great QB developer) won the Big East Title playing 4 diff QB's in '08 and it wouldn't surprise me to see a QB rotation here TY. This unit is vastly more exp'd and figures to put up great numbers in Kelly's 2nd year.

RUNNING BACKS - The top RB has not come close to reaching 1,000 in the last 4 yrs with the highest total in that span being PS#13 Armando Allen's 697 (4.9) in '09 (missed 3). Allen was the team's top rusher LY with 514 (4.8) when he was inj'd (missed L/5). RFr Pierre Wood (PS#4) had 58 yds on 7 att in the opener but then just 47 yds (17 att) in the next 5. He led in 6 of the last 7 and finished #1 with 603 (5.1). Wood's 39 yd td run vs WM was the longest scoring run by an Irish player since '03. Jonas Gray (PS#5) is one of the team's fastest, but only had 100 (5.0). It was the first time since 1971 that ND failed to produce a 100 yd rusher in a single game. This year they lose Allen (7 st), Robert Hughes (1 st, 300 yd, 4.4) and not listed below is Tyler Platz (5'10" 215 So). Despite the losses, I look for improved production from the RB's and their leading rusher should have their top total in the last 5 yrs.

RECEIVERS - In '07 ND had inexp'd WR's and were led by TE John Carlson (372, 9.3). In '08 WR Golden Tate (PS#27) led with 1,080 (18.6) and 63* true frosh Michael Floyd (PS#2) was #2 (719, 15.0). In '09 I called the Irish the #1 rec corps in

the country. Tate became the first Irish WR to win the Biletnikoff Award (1496, 16.1). Floyd was inj'd and DNP in 5 (795, 18.1), while TE Kyle Rudolph added 364 (11.0) despite missing 2. LY they had to replace Tate (#2DC). Floyd led with 1,025 (13.0). Rudolph was clearly the nation's top TE but played in just 6 (328, 11.7) due to hamstring surgery and was replaced by Tyler Eifert (#3, 352, 13.0). Converted RB Theo Riddick (PS#24) was #2 (414, 10.4) despite missing 4 and true frosh TJ Jones (PS#20) was #5 (306, 13.3). This year they lose Rudolph (6 st, #2DC MIN) and Duval Kamara (4 st, 11 rec). Thanks to Floyd's return they are clearly one of the top units in the country.

OFFENSIVE LINE - The ND O-lines are usually loaded with VHT's but the OL states the last few yrs haven't indicated it. In '07 they allowed an NCAA worst 58 sks (14.9%) and only avg 75 ypg (2.1 rush). In '08 they improved to 110 ypg (3.3) with 22 sks (4.9%) and in Weis' last year in '09 they ran for 128 ypg (3.8) with 25 sks (5.6%). LY they had to replace 3 multi year st's (105 sts lost) and had to learn new schemes. ND's numbers were similar (127 ypg, 4.0, 20 sks, 4.2%). This year they lose PS#14 LG Chris Stewart (13 st, 3Y st'r) and Alex Bullard (2 gm), but have 9 of the top 10 back (63 car sts), and are in the 2nd year of Kelly's system.

DEFENSIVE LINE - The Irish had to replace 3 st's in '07 (#2, #5 DC's). The less exp'd front allowed 195 ypg rush (4.3) which was the most here since '91 (just 19 sk). They made some improvement in '08 (134, 4.1, 26 sk) but moved to the 4-3 in '09. They had to replace 2 st's and the coaches compared rFr Kapron Lewis-Moore (PS#40) to former #1 overall NFL DC Steve Emtman. The D played well early but collapsed over the final 4 (263 ypg, 5.7). That dropped the season totals to 170 ypg (4.8). LY they switched back to the 3-4 and only lost 1 player (7 st, 20 tkl). As you would expect, they improved to allowing 142 ypg (4.0, 27 sk). Star NG Ian Williams did miss 4 sts and they played their best ball in the final 4 allowing just 92 ypg (2.9). This year they lose Williams (9 st, 38 tkl, 3.5 tfl) but have 5 of the top 6 back and should be stronger again. The Irish may also have signed the NCAA's best class of DE's with 3 super VHT signees including spring star Aaron Lynch (PS#7).

LINEBACKERS - In '09 the Irish had just 1 ret st'r ('08's #5 tkl'r) to a new 3 man LB unit. True frosh Manti Te'o lived up to his PS#1 billing starting 9 with 57 of his 63 tkl's (#4 tkl'r) in the last 8. LY they had to replace 2 LB (comb 3 sts, 36 tkl's) and ret'd their #2, #4 and #10 tkl'r's. They switched back to a 4 man group and Te'o led again with 133 tkl's which was #12 FBS. The D improved to allowing 20.2 ppg (best S/'02). Brian Smith (12 st '09) lost his starting spot to rFr Carlo Calabrese (PS#27), however Calabrese got inj'd and Smith started the last 5. TY they lose Smith (5 st, #7 tkl'r) and OLB Kerry Neal (12 st, #10 tkl'r). They return their top 2 tkl'r's from this unit (#1 & #5) and should show continued improvement.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - In '07 ND had to replace 2 st's (#6 & #7 DC's) but moved up to #26 in my PDR allowing just 162 ypg (53%), their lowest total S/'96. In '08 they had to replace 2 st's (#3DC) and slipped to #32. In '09 they had to replace 2 st's (#4DC) but moved LB Harrison Smith back to FS and also faced 3 true frosh QB's. Unfortunately 2 of them (Tate Forcier and Matt Barkley) earned the Davey O'Brien QB of the Wk Award vs them. The veteran unit dropped to #81. LY they had to replace 1 st'r. As you would expect, they improved to #37 (62.3%, 11-18). This year they lose CB Darrin Walls (13 st, 41 tkl, 3 int) but have 7 of the top 8 back and this unit goes from a weakness in '10 to a strength in '11.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Charlie Weis' units finished #39, #64, #93, #30 and #74 in my ST rankings. True frosh Nick Tausch (PS#6) missed his first FG in '09 then hit 14 in a row (school rec) before

missing the last 2 due to an injury. Walk-on David Ruffer hit 5-5 in Tausch's absence. Ruffer, who didn't even K for his HS team, walked on here in '08 while playing intramural football. Ruffer beat out Tausch in '10 and hit an amazing 18-19 FG's (L50) and also had 10 TB's on 65 KO's (ND had just 3 TB's prev 3 yrs, fewest in the NCAA). He hit his first 23 FG's of his career (new school rec) and was a Lou Groza finalist. In '09 Ben Turk avg 38.2 (33.6 tm net) and in '10, his net improved to 36.3. The unit went from #1 in the NCAA in PR defense to #43 the week they allowed a 59 yd PR td to Tulsa, but they gave up just 73 on the year. True frosh Bennett Jackson had 645 KR yds (22.2) and was solid in coverage. Brian Kelly's ST units at Cincy were #21, #1 and #8, but #33 here in '10. With most of the key components back, ND should have their highest finish in my ST rankings S/'00.

COACHES - Charlie Weis' 3 Super Bowl rings didn't spell success in the college game and he was ousted after a 16-21 record his last 3 yrs. Brian Kelly led Cincinnati to B2B BCS bowls incl a 12-0 reg season in '09 (named the BE COY all 3 seasons). He boasts a 179-62-2 record in 20 yrs as a HC (13Y Grand Valley St, 3Y C Mich and 3Y Cincy). The OC is Charley Molnar who has coached with Kelly at Cincy (WR cch/pass gm coor) and at CM. DC Bob Diaco led a Cincy defense with 1 ret st'r in '09 to 110 tfl (#3 FBS). Prior to that he was the LB/ST cch at Virginia for 3 years and also co-DC of CM in '05.

PHIL'S FORECAST

In '05 Charlie Weis stepped into a great situation as he inherited 10 ret st's on offense and they rolled up 36.7 ppg. They upended #3 Mich on the road, the highest ranked team that ND had beaten since 1993, and got the Irish to a BCS bowl (Fiesta). Weis was named the FWAA COY. In '06 they had 16 ret st's and the Irish opened at #2 (AP). The Irish rolled to a 10-1 record (#6) but lost to #3 USC by 20 then were thrashed in the bowl by 27 vs LSU. They also had a 26 pt home loss to Mich. It was a rebuilding year in '07 with just 9 ret st's and a true frosh QB. It ended up being a record breaking year for all of the wrong reasons. ND opened the season 0-5 (all 5 by DD) and finished 3-9. Nine true frosh started at some point. It was their 4th losing season since 1999 (13th school hist). In '08 the Irish were my #1 Most Improved Team and went from a losing season to a bowl. Three times however, the Irish blew a DD lead. They did get their first bowl win since 1993. Heading into '09 their 15 losses the previous 2 yrs were the most in school history and ND had a manageable schedule. Unfortunately they went just 6-6 and got rid of Weis who actually had a weaker win percentage than his predecessors, Bob Davie and Tyrone Willingham. All 6 of the Irish losses were by 7 or less. In '09 at UC Brian Kelly became the first FBS HC to surpass my magazine forecast for 6 straight yrs. That streak stopped LY as I expected a DD win season here. ND opened with a 23-12 win over Purdue. Against Mich, QB Dayne Crist missed 8 series in the 1H (inj ND 0 pts) and ND ended up 4 pts short. Mich St, with the playclock expired, ran a fake FG for a td in OT and pulled out a 3 pt win. ND was dominated at the LOS by Stanford to drop to 1-3. After rebounding with 3 straight wins, they were missing their top 3 rec's vs Navy and surprisingly lost by 18 pts (outgained by 75 yds, most of ssn). The next week they had a 458-399 yd edge vs Tulsa but true frosh Rees was inj'd in the EZ, down by 1, in FG range to drop to 4-5. They also lost starting QB Crist to inj. Rees would go 4-0 as a st'r although they beat a Utah tm that was coming off a devastating loss to TCU, a USC tm without their starting QB, and a Miami, FI tm that never plays well in the cold (unseasonable cold 34" in El Paso). Still, their 8-5 finish was the best in 4 yrs and Kelly has a veteran squad with 17 ret st's that are now in the 2nd year of his schemes. They could be favored in their first 11 gms, are a much stronger team and all 9 sets of my power ratings call for double digit wins with 3 of them calling for a 12-0 season!

OFFENSE

JERSEY # IN BLUE

QB 10 DAYNE CRIST JR. 6-4 235 PS#5. 4 gm (ACL) 130 (50%), 1-1 ratio rFr. 9 st (inj) 2033 (59%) 15-7 LY. **11** Tommy Rees (6'2" 210 So) PS#49. L/4 st, 1106 (61%) 12-8 true. **12** Andrew Hendrix (6'2" 218 rFr) PS#12. **TB 20 CIERREWOOD SO.** 6-0 210 PS#4. 5 st, 603 (5.1) rFr. **25** Jonas Gray (5'10" 230 Sr) PS#5. 1 st, 209 (3.8) '08-'09. **LY 31** Cameron Robertson (6'0" 218 rFr) PS#36. Inj'd spg '11. **29** Patrick Coughlin (6'0" 195 Sr). **WR 3 MICHAEL FLOYD SR.** 6-3 227 PS#2. 17 st, 1514 (16.5) '08-'09. 12 st, 1025 (13.0) LY. **87** Daniel Smith (6'4" 215 So) PS#61. **14** Luke Massa (6'4" 220 Fr) PS#86. QB LY. **38** Nick Fitzpatrick (5'8" 160 So). Ryan Liebscher Fr. **WR 6 THEO RIDDICK JR.** 5-11 198 PS#24. 1 st, 160 rush (5.5) true RB. 8 st, 414 rec (10.4) LY. **9** Robby Tomko (5'9" 175 Jr) PS#109. 21 (7.0) true. 2 st, 187 (13.4) LY. DaVaris Daniels (6'2" 175 Fr) PS#15. George Atkinson PS#20. **WR 7 TJ JONES SO.** 5-11 187 PS#20. 7 st, 12 gm, 306 (13.3) true. **81** John Goodman (6'3" 207 Jr) PS#10. 1 st, 104 (17.3) rFr. 3 st, 142 (9.7) LY. **1** Deion Walker (6'3" 202 Jr) PS#13. 1 rec rFr. No gm action LY. **TE 80 TYLER EIFERT SO.** 6-6 242 PS#24. 8 st, 352 (13.0) rFr. **83** Mike Ragone (6'4" 245 Sr) PS#2. 1 rec true. RS '08. 9 st, 24 gm, 92 (10.2) '09-'10. **82** Alex Welch (6'4" 245 rFr) PS#10. Jake Golic (6'4" 235 So) PS#21. 2 gm LY. **C 52 BRAXTON CAVE JR.** 6-3 303 PS#39. 12 gm rFr. 13 st C LY. **57** Mike Golic (6'3" 295 Jr) PS#3. 3 gm LY. 12 gm LY. **LS 60** Jordan Cowart (6'2" 215 Jr) PS#326. 11 gm true. 13 gm LY. Ryan Kavanagh (6'3" 200 Sr) 13 gm LY. **RG 78 TREVOR ROBINSON SR.** 6-5 300 PS#13. 3 st RG. 11 games as a true frosh. 11 st RG (inj) '09. 13 st RG LY. **73** Lane Clelland (6'5" 297 Jr) PS#19. 5 gm rFr. 9 games backup OT LY. Nick Martin (6'4" 270 Fr) PS#71. **LG 66 CHRIS WATT SO.** 6-3 310 PS#6. 13 games as backup OG rFr. **76** Andrew Nuss (6'5" 303 Sr) PS#58. 2 games as a rFr. 10 games in '09. 12 games as backup OT LY. Connor Hanratty (6'4" 295 Fr) PS#36. **RT 75 TAYLOR DEVER SR.** 6-5 297 PS#149. 12 games as a rFr. 6 games mostly on spec tms in '09. 10 starts at RT, 11 games (inj'd) LY. **74** Christian Lombard (6'5" 301 rFr) PS#14. Matt Hegarty (6'5" 280 Fr) PS#4. **LT 70 ZACK MARTIN SO.** 6-4 300 PS#32. 13 st (11 LT, 2 RT) rFr. **64** Tate Nichols (6'8" 320 rFr) PS#123. **56** Brad Carrico PS#86DL. IFS. **71** Dennis Mahoney (6'7" 289 Sr) no action 2Y. **79** Matt Tansey (6'6" 250 So). **K 97 CAROL RUFFER SR.** 6-1 176 1 gm '08. 5-5 FG, L/46 '09. 18-19 FG, L/50, 44 tm AA LY. **40** Nick Tausch (6'0" 190 Jr) PS#6. 14-17 FG, L/46 true. 1-1 FG, L/34 LY. **27** Kyle Brindza (6'1" 219 Fr) PS#1. In for spg.

2011 PROJECTED STARTING LINEUP

DE 89 KAPRON LEWIS-MOORE JR. 6-4 295 PS#40. 9 st, 46 tkl's, 7 tfl rFr. 13 st, 62 tkl's, 2.5 tfl LY. **19** Aaron Lynch PS#7. IFS. **96** Kona Schwenke (6'4" 285 So) PS#56. 2 tkl true. **93** Bruce Heggie (6'5" 270 Fr). Joe Marek (6'2" 225 So). **NG 98 SEAN CRYNAR JR.** 6-4 280 PS#13. 1 st, 11 gm, 3 tkl's as a rFr. 4 st, 13 games, 33 tkl, 3 tfl LY. **9** Louis Nix (6'3" 340 Fr) PS#19. **92** Tyler Stockton (6'0" 302 So) PS#17. **99** Brandon Newman (6'0" 303 Jr) PS#46. **DE 90 ETHAN JOHNSON SR.** 6-4 300 PS#11. 4 st, 13 gm, 18 tkl, 5 tfl true. 11 st, 12 gm, 32 tkl, 6 tfl '09. 13 st, 34 tkl, 6 tfl LY. **94** Hafis Williams (6'1" 285 Jr) PS#33. 6 games as a rFr. 11 tkl, 1 pbu LY. Stephen Tuitt PS#6. **OLB 45 DARIUS FLEMING SR.** 6-2 250 PS#26. 3 st, 13 gms, 24 tkl true. 8 st, 11 gm, 29 tkl, 12 tfl '09. 13 st, 49 tkl, 11 tfl LY. **46** Steve Flier (6'3" 235 Sr) PS#1. 19 tkl '08-'09. 13 gm, 14 tkl led ND in ST tkl LY. Ishaq Williams PS#4. IFS. **ILB 5 MANTITE'O JR.** 6-2 255 PS#1. 9 st, 63 tkl, 5.5 tfl true. 13 st, 133 tkl, 9.5 tfl, 3rd TM AA LY. **54** Anthony McDonald (6'2" 238 Jr) PS#14. 21 tkl 2Y. **8** Kendall Moore (6'1" 242 rFr) PS#27. Sean Oxley (6'2" 227 Jr). **ILB 44 CARLO CALABRESE SO.** 6-1 245 PS#27. 8 st, 11 gm, 60 tkl, 5 tfl rFr. **48** Dan Fox (6'3" 230 So) PS#35. **36** David Poslusny (6'0" 235 Jr) PS#82. 4 tkl 2Y. **53** Justin Utup (6'1" 251 rFr) PS#52. 13 gm, 20 tkl mostly ST as a rFr. **OLB 55 PRINCE SHEMA SO.** 6-2 250 PS#36. 15 tkl, 4.5 sk true. **13** Danny Sporn (6'2" 242 So) PS#32. 1 tkl true. Ben Councell (6'5" 220 Fr) PS#24. 4.49 spd. Jarrett Grace (6'3" 235 Fr) PS#33. **47** Jonathan Frantz (6'2" 211 Jr). **CB 4 GARY GRAY SR.** 5-11 195 PS#12. 15 tkl, 4 pd rFr. 7 st, 28 tkl, 2 pd '09. 13 st, 66 tkl, 8 pd LY. **2** Bennett Jackson (6'0" 181 So) PS#49. 10 tkl true. **32** Andrew Plaska (5'11" 185 Sr). **43** Joe Romano (5'9" 165 rFr). **CB 12 ROBERT BLANTON SR.** 6-1 196 PS#22. 3 st, 33 tkl, 5 pd true. 9 st, 38 tkl, 4 pd '09. 1 st, 52 tkl, 7 pd LY. **23** Lo Wood (5'10" 182 So) PS#65. 3 tkl true. Matthias Farley (6'0" 194 Fr) PS#91. **42** Nick Lezynski (5'9" 180 Sr). **SS 22 HARRISON SMITH SR.** 6-2 214 PS#22. 9 st LB, 57 tkl, 8.5 tfl rFr. 11 st, 69 tkl, 6.5 tfl '09. 13 st, 93 tkl, 7 int, 7 pbu LY. **15** Dan McCarthy (6'2" 205 Jr) PS#6. 1 tkl rFr. 7 gm, 5 tkl LY. Josh Atkinson PS#61. Jalen Brown PS#102. **FS 17 ZEKE MOTTA JR.** 6-2 215 PS#17. 12 tkl true. 8 st, 50 tkl, 3 pd LY. **26** Jamoris Slaughter (6'0" 198 Jr) PS#35. 1 st, 14 tkl rFr. 5 st, 31 tkl LY. **28** Austin Collinsworth (6'1" 200 So) PS#82. 7 tkl true. **24** Chris Salvi (5'10" 185 Jr). **35** BEN TUCKER JR. 5-11 196 PS#10. 26 punts (38.2) L/53, 9 In20, 2 true. **28** 38.3 L/56, net 36.3 LY. **27** Kyle Brindza (6'1" 219 Fr) PS#1. IFS. **37** Mike Grieco (6'1" 185 Jr) DNP LY. **17** QB/holder Matt Mulvey (6'2" 191 Jr).

