

NOTRE DAME BASEBALL GAME NOTES – AT RUTGERS (MAY 10, 2003)

The Notre Dame baseball team (36-12, 14-4 BIG EAST) – ranked as high as 20th in the national polls – returns from final exams this weekend with yet another BIG EAST showdown vs. rival Rutgers (28015, 15-4) ... RU holds a slight lead atop the BIG EAST standings (which are determined by winning pct.) in the race for the four-team BIG EAST Tournament, followed by ND and West Virginia (14-4), Virginia Tech (13-7), Boston College (10-8) and Pittsburgh (10-10) ... this weekend's action also includes a VT-Pitt showdown, with WVU playing at 10th-place Villanova and BC at 7th-place St. John's ... the final week will see ND at VT, RU at Villanova, WVU at BC and Pitt at 9th-place UConn ... the Irish could clinch a BIG EAST postseason spot through a number of combinations in Saturday's games.

MEDIA COVERAGE – All of Notre Dame's 2003 regular-season and postseason games again will be broadcast by South Bend-based WDND 1620 AM (and its sister station, WNDV 1490) ... the broadcasts are available via the internet at www.und.com (College Sports Pass subscription required) ... und.com also provides GameTracker livestats on the website's main page, for all home games and select road games (including the Rutgers series).

Probable Pitching Rotations

Game 1:	ND – soph. RHP Chris Niesel (2.61, 7-1, 79.1 IP, 77 Ks, 14 BB, 66 H, .219 opp. avg.) RU – sophomore RHP Jack Egbert (4.83, 7-3, 63.1 IP, 52 Ks, 16 BB, 71 H, .285 opp. avg.)
Game 2:	ND – soph. RHP John Axford (2.53, 9-1, 64.0 IP, 61 Ks, 34 BB, 51 H, .226 opp. avg.) RU – junior LHP Shaun Parker (5.23, 2-2, 63.2 IP, 41 Ks, 41 BB, 69 H, .280 opp. avg.)
Game 3:	ND – sr. RHP Ryan Kalita (3.83, 5-1, 56.1 IP, 44 Ks, 22 BB, 50 H, .243 opp. avg.) RU – freshman LHP Matt Putsay (3.20, 2-0, 25.1 IP, 12 Ks, 4 BB, 22 H, .227 opp. avg.) or soph. RHP Aaron Kalb (7.49, 2-1, 33.2 IP, 29 Ks, 18 BB, 40 H, .303 opp. avg.)

QUICK NOTES ON THE IRISH – ND owns a 16-1 first-inning scoring edge during the last 13 games and manufactured its second-most productive opening frame of the season (4 R) in last week's Oakland game ... senior closer J.P. Gagne has tied the ND record for saves in a season (11) ... freshman RHP Ryan Doherty has not allowed on earned run since a rough outing in the season opener, spanning nine appearances and 17.2 innings ... Gagne has converted all 11 of his traditional save chances this season ... Steve Sollmann's 27 stolen bases have bested his brother Scott's freshman-year total (26, in '94) for 10th on the ND single-season SB list (Scott holds the ND record, with 51 in 1996) ... Gagne has not allowed an earned run in his last five outings (7.2 IP) and owns a 1.41 ERA in his last 11 appearances (3 ER, 19.1 IP) ... his 87 career appearances are just five shy of Chris Michalak's ND record ... the Irish are 9-1 in one-run games this season ... last week's opening win over West Virginia was just the fifth 1-0 game of the nine-year **Paul Mainieri** era (ND has won all five) and was ND's first 1-0 game in BIG EAST play ... ND has been shut out just once in the last 300 games (by RU in 2001, 11-0 at ND).

THREE-GUN SALUTE – ND's three-man pitching rotation is unmatched among the BIG EAST stat leaders (they are 21-3 overall in '03 and a combined 37-5 in their ND careers) ... sophomore RHP **John Axford** (9-1) and WVU's Zac Cline (9-3) own the most wins of any BIG EAST pitcher, with Axford also ranking second in ERA (2.53), eighth in strikeouts (61), and seventh in both low opponent batting average (.226) and innings pitched (64.0) ... his classmate **Chris Niesel** checks in among the BIG EAST hurlers with the most Ks (77), second-most innings (79.1), fourth in ERA (2.61), third in opponent batting (.219) and sixth in complete games (3) ... senior RHP **Ryan Kalita** ranks ninth among BIG EAST pitchers in opponent batting (.242), plus a 3.83 ERA, 5-1 record and 44 Ks in 56.1 IP ... in conference games only, Kalita owns the fourth-best ERA in the conference stats (2.13) while ranking fifth in wins (4-1) and fourth in opponent batting (.198) ... Axford's stats in five BIG EAST starts include a 2.77 ERA (9th), .148 opponent batting (1st) and a 4-1 record (5th) while Niesel is 5-0 in league action (2nd) with a 2.40 ERA (7th), 44 Ks (2nd), .224 opp. batting (7th) and 41.1 innings (4th) ... ND leads the BIG EAST with a 2.67 staff ERA in conference games, with three of the top-nine individual ERA leaders – plus senior closer **J.P. Gagne's** 1.62 ERA in 2003 BIG EAST action (in 16.2 IP, the BIG EAST stat leaders require 1 IP per team game, leaving Gagne just off the list a mere 1.1 IP short) ... here's a look at the combined stats for Niesel, Axford and Kalita:

'03 Combined Overall Stats: 2.94 ERA (65 ER, 199.2 IP), 21-3, 182 Ks, 70 BB, .227 opp. avg. (167-733), 16 WP, 12 HB
Nine-Inning Averages: 8.2 Ks, 3.2 BB, 7.5 H

2003 BIG EAST: 2.39 (28 ER in 105.1 IP), 13-2, 101 Ks, 35 BB, .212 opp. avg. (80-378), 4 WP, 4 HB
Nine-Inning Averages: 8.6 Ks, 3.0 BB, 6.8 H

Overall Career: 3.19 (141 ER in 397.1 IP), 37-5, 354 Ks, 171 BB, .236 opp. avg. (349-1473), 32 WP, 24 HB
Nine-Inning Averages: 8.0 Ks, 3.9 BB, 7.9 H

Chris Niesel – 2003 game-by-game (all starts, 12)

* - named BIG EAST pitcher of the week

Date	Opponent	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	HR	WP	HB	GO	Score	W-L	ERA
2/21	vs. Dayton (@ASU)	6.0	6	4	4	2	1	0	1	0	10	10-9	–	6.00
2/28	vs. Nebraska (@M'dome)	4.0	9	6	6	1	2	1	0	0	6	1-7	L	9.00
3/8	vs Vanderbilt (@UNF)	8.0	3	1	0	0	9	0	1	2	10	3-1	–	5.00
3/13	*vs. E. Illinois (@UNF)	8.0	2	2	0	2	9	0	1	0	7	3-2	W	3.46
3/23	at Villanova	7.1	5	2	2	0	11	0	0	0	6	2-3	–	3.24
3/29	Georgetown	7.0	6	2	2	1	9	0	0	0	7	6-2	W	3.12
4/6	at St. John's	6.0	9	3	2	2	4	0	1	0	10	11-3	W	3.11
4/12	vs. Creighton (Ros. St.)	6.0	4	1	1	3	6	0	0	0	6	2-1	W	2.92
4/17	Pittsburgh	7.0	8	2	2	0	4	0	1	0	12	5-2	W	2.88
4/22	Ball State	6.0	7	1	1	1	6	0	0	0	6	1-3	–	2.76
4/27	Connecticut	7.0	6	3	3	1	7	0	0	0	5	6-3	W	2.86
5/3	*West Virginia	7.0	1	9	0	1	9	0	0	0	5	1-0	W	2.61
Totals		79.1	66	27	23	14	77	1	5	3	90		7-1	2.88

Niesel's Nine-Inning Averages: 7.5 hits, 1.6 walks, 8.7 Ks, 10.2 groundouts (6.2 IP per outing; 36.4 BF per 9 IP)**Situational Pitching:** .215 opp. batting with runners on, .222 with 2 outs, 28% of leadoff batters reached (2.6 per 9 IP)**Chris Niesel – Career Stats**

Year	ERA	W-L	GP/GS	CG	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	2B-3B-HR	BF/B/Avg	WP	HB
2002	3.36	4-0	14/11	0	2	72.1	68	33	27	18	62	17-0-7	307/.241	2	4
2003	2.61	7-1	12/12	3	0	79.1	66	27	23	14	77	14-2-1	321/.219	5	3
Totals	2.97	11-1	26/23	3	2	151.2	134	60	50	32	139	10-2-8	628/.230	7	7

NIESEL NOTES

- Has **won 29 of last 31** overall decisions, dating back to 13-0 record as a senior All-American at Aquinas High School
- Coming off near-no-hitter vs. WVU, allowing bunt single with two outs left in 7-inning opener (23 BF, BB, 9 Ks) ... would have been first no-hitter by ND pitcher since 1988 (Brian Piotrowicz vs. Ball State).
- Since suffering the only loss of his ND career (Feb. 28 vs. Nebraska), **Chris Niesel** has dominated in his last 10 outings (7-0) to the tune of a 1.69 ERA, a .199 opp. batting avg. and nearly a 7-to-1 K-to-walk ratio (74/11) in those 10 starts.
- * **27-2 in last 29** decisions (13-0 as senior at Aquinas HS, 9-1 at ND, 3-1 in '02 Cape Cod League, 2-0 in ND Blue-Gold series).
- Has allowed just **one run**, eight hits (.186 opp. avg.) and no walks in the **1st inning** this season (12 IP, 17 Ks) while allowing just **one run in the 4th** (12 IP, 9 H, .205, 3 BB, 6 Ks) ... has averaged nearly 20 outs per 9 IP via Ks (8.7) or groundouts (10.2).
- Owns a **5.5 season K-to-walk** ratio that would rank 5th in ND history ... his **4.34 career K-to-BB** ratio (139/29) is ahead of Alan Walania's ND record (4.00) ... almost 8-to-1 K/BB in last three outings: 20 IP, 23 Ks, 3 BB.
- His season **walk average of 1.59/9 IP** would rank 11th in ND history ... his **1.90 career walk avg.** is 4th in the ND record book (best since '94).
- 77 Ks in '03, on **pace for 96 Ks** in 15 starts (would be 7th-best in ND history) ... his .219 opp. batting would rank 8th in ND record book (stat kept at ND since '91).
- 10th all-time ND pitcher with **multiple double-digit K games** in his career (10 vs. Southern Illinois in '02, 11 vs. Villanova in '03) and 5th to do so in the 9-year Mainieri era (the others are Brad Lidge, Tim Kalita, Aaron Heilman and Danny Tamayo) ... also owns five 9-K games in his ND career (four in '03).
- Combines with John Axford (12 Ks vs. WMU) as 10th pair of ND **teammates ever to post double-digit Ks** in the same season ... the others include Ron Mottl and Dick Bunker ('55), Jim Sholl and Don Wolfe ('75), the 1977 trio of Sholl, Bob Hughes, and Mike Bobinski, David Sinnes and Al Walania ('93), Darin Schmalz and Christian Parker ('96), the '98 trio of Brad Lidge, Alex Shilliday and Tim Kalita – and Aaron Heilman with Kalita ('99), Drew Duff ('00) and Danny Tamayo ('01).
- Fourth ND player ever to receive **multiple BIG EAST pitcher-of-the-week** honors in same season, joining Aaron Heilman (3 in '99, 4 in '00, 2 in '01), Scott Cavey (2 in '00) and Danny Tamayo (3 in '01) in that distinction ... joins three-time recipient Chris Lambert of Boston College (the 2002 BIG EAST pitcher of the year) as only pitchers to earn multiple weekly awards from the BIG EAST this season.
- His **11-1 career record** with the Irish could include upwards of nine more wins (due to lack of run support or lost leads by the bullpen), with his 2002 season also interrupted by a bout with mononucleosis.
- Had dominating **2002 postseason** with 2.05 ERA in five outings (four starts), plus 22 Ks, 7 BB and 23 hits allowed in 26.1 IP (he won the 3-1 clincher at top-ranked Florida State in the Super-Regional and had a strong CWS start vs. Rice).

John Axford – Career Stats

Year	ERA	W-L	GP/GS	CG	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	2B-3B-HR	BF/B/Avg	WP	HB
2002	3.95	5-2	17/12	0	0	70.2	59	45	31	59	64	15-2-1	324/.231	7	6
2003	2.53	9-1	11/1	0	0	64.0	51	20	18	34	61	9-4-3	268/.226	6	3
Totals	3.27	14-3	28/23	0	0	134.2	110	65	49	93	125	24-6-4	592/.229	13	9

John Axford – 2003 game-by-game

Date	Opponent	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	HR	WP	HB	GO	Score	W-L	ERA
2/22	vs. Newman	6.0	8	2	2	2	1	0	1	0	11	15-5	W	3.00
3/2	vs. Wake Forest	7.0	4	1	1	2	4	0	1	0	8	2-1	–	2.08
3/10	vs. Navy	5.0	6	3	2	1	7	0	0	0	6	7-3	W	2.50
3/15	vs. Creighton	6.0	5	2	2	2	8	1	3	0	3	10-3	W	2.62
3/23	at Villanova	5.0	2	1	1	4	7	0	0	0	5	3-2	W	2.48
3/29	Georgetown	6.0	3	2	1	5	8	0	1	0	2	13-3	W	2.31
4/9	Western Michigan	7.0	6	1	1	0	12	1	0	2	6	7-1	W	2.14
4/14	Central Michigan	7.0	5	2	2	5	4	0	0	0	7	8-3	W	2.20
4/19	Seton Hall	6.0	3	2	2	5	2	1	0	0	8	9-3	W	2.29
4/26	Connecticut	6.0	4	1	1	6	6	0	0	1	4	11-4	W	2.21
5/3	West Virginia	3.0	5	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	4	5-7	L	2.53
Totals		64.0	51	20	16	34	61	3	6	3	64		8-0	2.53

Axford's Situational Pitching in 2003: .204 opp. batting with runners on base, .296 with 2 outs, 39% of leadoff batters reached base (3.5 per 9 IP)

Axford's Situational Pitching in 2002: .237 opp. batting with runners on base, .275 with 2 outs, 46% of leadoff batters reached base (3.7 per 9 IP)

Axford's Nine-Inning Averages in 2003: 7.2 hits, 4.8 walks, 8.6 Ks, 9.0 groundouts (6.0 IP per start; 37.7 BF per 9 IP)

Axford's Nine-Inning Averages in 2002: 7.5 hits, 7.5 walks, 8.2 Ks, 9.6 groundouts (4.2 IP per start)

SOPHOMORE SURGE

- Second-year RHP **John Axford** has shown no effects of a sophomore slump, with one of his most noteworthy improvements coming in a lowered walk total ... Axford averaged 7.5 walks per nine innings as a freshman but has dropped his **BB average to 4.8** in 2003 ... he owns a 14-3 career record and nearly has doubled his 2002 win total (5-2 in '02, 9-1 in '03) while slicing 1.4 runs off his ERA (3.95 in '02, 2.53 in '03).

- After suffering a 13-6 loss in the first BIG EAST weekend of the 2002 season (at UConn), Axford **won his next 13** decisions (4 in '02, 9 in '03) before last week's loss to WVU ... during that 13-0 span of 22 appearances (20 starts), he allowed more than two earned runs only three times ... Aaron Heilman (15-0 in '01) is the only ND pitcher in the last 75 years to post a longer winning streak than Axford's ... Ed Walsh went 17-0 in a 1926-28 span, Frank "Dreams" Scanlan was 16-0 spanning the 1907-09 seasons and Herb Kelly was 14-0 in a 1912-14 stretch.

- Only four pitchers in the nation entered the week with 10-plus wins and 0-1 losses ... Axford needs one more win to become the 10th different ND pitcher ever with 10-plus wins in a season (Heilman and Tom Price, 12-2 in '93 and 14-5 in '94, are the only ND pitchers ever to win 12-plus in one season).

- Axford posted a .231 opponent batting average in 2002 (10th-best by an ND pitcher since 1991) but has done even better this season (.226, would be 10th-best since '91) ... opponents are batting just .204 vs. Axford with runners on base.

- One measure of a quality pitching performance is the combined total of strikeouts and groundball outs (18-plus per 9 IP generally is a solid average) and Axford joins many of his teammates in grading out well in that area – averaging **17.6 outs per nine innings via Ks (8.6) or groundouts (9.0)**.

- Axford's 11 starts have included just one run allowed in the **2nd inning** (0.82, 7 H, .184 opp. batting, 3 BB, 5 Ks) while he has clamped down to allow a total of only two runs in the **4th-6th** innings this season (1.00, 18 IP, 31 Ks, 15 BB, 14 H, .153 opp. batting).

- Axford was one win shy of joining Frank "Dreams" Scanlan (1908, 10-0) and **Aaron Heilman** (2001, 15-0) as the only ND pitchers ever to start a season 10-0.

- Axford is the 17th ND pitcher ever to post **12-plus Ks** in a game (vs. WMU) and just the fourth to do so since 1980, joining Darin Schmalz (12 in 9 IP at Georgetown, in '96), Brad Lidge (12 in 7 IP vs. Pittsburgh, at Three Rivers in '98) and Aaron **Heilman** in that distinction ... Heilman posted 12-K games in 2000 (vs. Georgia in the Metrodome, 8 IP) and 2001 (vs. Rutgers in the BIG EAST Tournament, 9 IP), in addition to an historic 18-K game at West Virginia in 2000 (10 IP).

ND CAREER STATS VS. RUTGERS (cont.)

Ryan Kalita – 1.04, 1-0, 2 GP, 8.2 IP, 9 H, 3 BB, 6 Ks

Cerulo – E6F ... 5-3, 4-3
Normane – F-9/SF/RBI ... BB, 4-3, BB
Rodriguez – 1B-RC/RBI/R ... 6U-3 GDP, F-9, P-4
Vasquez – 1B-4, BB, KS, 6-3
Frazier – 1-3/SAC ... KS, 1B-LS, F-8 LC
Esposito – 4-3 ... KL
Badger – KS, KS, 1B-7

Peter Ogilvie – 6.30, 0-2, 2 GS, 10 IP, 13 H, 6 BB, 7 Ks, 2 HB

Cerulo – 3B-LC/R, 1B-MI ... KL, 1B-8, KS
Normane – 4-3 ... 4-3, P-4, 1B-RC/RBI/R, BB/R
Esposito – BB ... KS
Badger – 6-3, 6-3, F-9, 5-3
Frazier – L-5-3 DP ... KS, KS, P-4, F-8
Rodriguez – HR-7/2 RBI ... P-4, 2B-RL, 6-3, 1B-RC/RBI

John Axford – 8.22, 2 GS, 7.2 IP, 7 H, 11 BB, 8 Ks, HB

Badger – 0-for-3, 2 BB, R, K (KS, BB/R, 6-3 ... BB, 6-3)
Frazier – 1-for-3, 2 BB, 2 RBI, 2 R, 2 Ks (KS, 1B-7/2 RBI, KS ... BB/R, BB/R)
Normane – 3-for-4, BB, 2 RBI (1B-CF/RBI, 5-4-3 GDP, BB ... 1B-8, 2B/RBI)
Esposito – 3 BB (BB, BB, BB)
Vasquez – F-9
Cerulo – 0-for-2, BB, R (BB/R, L-9 ... F-8)
Rodriguez - KS

Matt Laird – 16.20, 1-0, 2 GP, 3.1 IP, 6 H, 3 BB, 3 Ks, 3 HB

Wolski – HBP, F-8
Cerulo – F-7

RUTGERS 2002 STATS VS. ND

Cory Rodriguez: .375 (6-for-16), 4 GS, 2 R, 4 RBI, HR, 2B, 2 Ks
Nick Cerulo: .350 (7-for-20), 6 GS, 4 R, 3B, 2 BB, 4 Ks, 3 Es
Steve Normane: .333 (7-for-21), 6 GS, 2 R, 7 RBI, 2B, 5 BB, 2 Ks
Jeff Frazier: .217 (5-for-23), 6 GS, 4 R, 4 RBI, HR, 2 BB, HBP, 7 Ks, 0-1 SB, 2 Es
Vinny Esposito: .182 (2-for-11), 5 GP/3 GS, 2B, 4 BB, 6 Ks, 1-1 SB
Alberto Vasquez: .125 (1-for-8), 3 GP/2 GS, R, BB, 4 Ks, E
Graig Badger: .105 (2-for-19), 5 GS, 2 R, 4 BB, 5 Ks, E
Rich Canuso: 0-for-1
Jamell Rosario: 2 GP
Jason Grover: 1 GP

Jack Egbert – 3.18, 1 GS, 5.2 IP, 5 H, 3 BB, 5 Ks

Sollmann – 1-4-3, 1B-2/SB, 2-3/BU
Sanchez – KL, 1B-LS
Billmaier – 4-3, 1-3
Thaman – KL, KS

Sean Atchison – 7.71, 2 GP, 4.2 IP, 6 H, 3 BB, 3 Ks, WP, BK

Billmaier – KS, BB
Thaman – 4-3, 1B-2/R ... 1B-4/R
Sanchez – FF2, KS
Sollmann – 1-3/SAC, 3B-RC/2 RBI ... F-7

30-SOMETHING – Notre Dame reached 30 wins with single-digit losses (30-9) for just the sixth time in team history, with only two previous ND teams – the 2001 squad (30-5-1, en route to claiming the No. 1 ranking) and the 1989 unit (30-8) – reaching 30 wins quicker than the current Irish squad (the 1990, '94 and '99 ND teams also went 30-9) ... the Irish program now is on the **verge of its 15th consecutive season with 40-plus wins** – the fourth-longest active 40-win streak in Division I baseball, behind Florida State (26, including 40-8 in 2003), Wichita State (25; entered week 34-21 in '03) and Clemson (17; entered week 32-13 in '03).

DEFENSIVE-MINDED – Notre Dame's .972 season fielding pct. remains well on team-record pace (three previous teams posted a .965), with the Irish totaling just 52 errors in 48 games ... ND has posted 18 error-free games, 15 one-error games and just seven games with three-plus Es ... the current eight starting position players have combined to make less than one error per game (40 in 48 GP), with two of freshman RF Cody Rizzo's errors coming as the backup catcher ... unearned runs have provided the margin of defeat for the Irish just twice this season, in the 14-8 loss to Arizona State (6 UER) and the 3-1 loss to Ball State (2 UER in the 9th).

CONFERENCE COMMAND – The Irish now own a 92-28 (.767) record in seven-plus seasons of BIG EAST play, with Paul Mainieri owning the best BIG EAST winning pct. in the league's history ... ND's 71 all-time BIG EAST series now have included 55 series wins, eight even series and just eight series wins by the opponent ... the Irish are 59-7 in April during the past three seasons and 40-6 in their last 46 home games ... since starting 0-4 in 2002 BIG EAST play, ND has gone 32-8 in its last 40 BIG EAST games ... ND is nearing a +100 victory margin over the past three seasons (135-43-1).

QUICK NOTES ON THE ND HITTERS (in probable batting order)

(1) Steve Sollmann (Jr., 2B; Cincinnati...preseason All-American; Acad. All-Am. cand.; tri-captain; all-BIG EAST '01, '02)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'01	.362	61/61	221	52	80	9-2-5	36	108/.489	30	4	29	0	.440	4	6	23-34	21 (.928)
'02	.362	59/57	213	53	77	8-4-2	47	99/.465	22	3	18	3	.420	5	6	6-6	8 (.969)
'03	.376	46/46	181	53	68	12-4-3	29	97/.546	22	0	16	1	.441	1	4	27-34	6 (.974)
Tot.	.366	166/164	615	158	225	29-10-10	112	304/.494	74	7	63	4	.433	10	16	56-74	35 (.955)

- Leads team in six categories – batting avg. (.376), on-base pct. (.441), runs (53), stolen bases (27), hits (68) and walks (22) – while ranking 2nd in slugging pct. (.536), triples (4) and total bases (97), 3rd in RBI (29) and home runs (3), 4th in doubles (12) and 5th in sac. bunts (4).

- **Situational Hitting:** owns team's best leadoff on-base pct. (.579), 3rd on team in batting with runners in scoring position (.358) and pct. of baserunners advanced (.595) ... also .273 batter with 2 outs (10 RBI), 2-for-6 with bases loaded.

- **Career vs. Rutgers:** .297 (11-for-37), 9 GS, 9 R, 9 RBI, HR, 3B, 2 BB, 2 Ks, 5-5 SB

- **WVU Series:** 2-for-11 (.182), 2 R, 2B, BB, 3 Ks, E

- Recent **Trends:** hitting just .200 (4-for-20, 5 R, 0 RBI) in last six games

- **'03 BIG EAST Games:** .338 (23-for-68), 22 R, 16 RBI, 2 HR, 6 2B, 10 BB, 9 Ks, 9-12 SB, 4 Es

- Had career-best **15-game hit streak** (24 of 25) snapped last week vs. Oakland, longest by ND player since Steve Stanley's 16-game hit streak in 2000 ... hit .422 in the streak (24-for-57, 5 RBI, 20 R, 3B, 6 2B, 9 BB, 3 Ks).

- Entered week ranked **19th in nation with 0.59 stolen bases** per game ... also ranks 9th among BIG EAST players in overall batting avg., plus 1st in runs and SBs, 4th in hits and 3Bs, and 5th in TBs.

- Went **18 games** (73 chances) **without an error**, before E vs. UConn on 4/27 (just six Es in last 63 GP with ND).

- Has gone **hitless in consecutive games just twice** in '03, **hits in 37 of 46** games played.

- Team-best **24 multi-hit** games (five 3-hit games; 4-for-4 gm 2 vs. Georgetown), seven multi-RBI games (4th on team).

- **ND Career Record Book:** 8th with **.366** career **batting** avg. ... already 6th with **56 stolen bases** (27 in '03), 12 behind Dan Bautch (68; '90-'92) ... also 6th with **462** fielding **assists** (31 behind '92 grad Craig Counsell).

- Picked up 200th career hit at St. John's on 4/6 (now 225) ... ND record for hits by junior is Steve Stanley's 267 ('02) ... others: Dan Peltier (257, '89), Brant Ust (243, '99), his brother Scott Sollmann (239, '96) and Brian Stavisky (231, '03).

- Joins Brennan Grogan (11/10) and Javi Sanchez (14/13) as ND players with more **walks (22) than Ks (16)**.

- Joined J.P. Gagne on Verizon/CoSIDA **Academic All-District V** team, now moves on to Academic All-American ballot (3.6 cumulative GPA as marketing major) ... also recently became rare junior-year recipient of ND's Francis Patrick **O'Connor Award** (recognizing student-athletes who most embody "team spirit, inspiration, courage," etc.).

- Shifted to **leadoff spot** on Spring Break trip, after batting in No. 2 spot for most of his ND career.

- Twice **BIG EAST player of the week** (8-for-17 in week one, then 11-for-23 in first six games of Spring Break trip).

- Hit **3-run inside-the-park HR** in 3-2 win over Eastern Illinois.

- Prep CF who now is rated BIG EAST's **top defensive 2B** for 2003 (per *Baseball America* preview).

(2) Brennan Grogan (Fr., CF; Tequesta, FL)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'03	.303	43/41	145	34	44	2-5-0	21	56/.386	11	2	10	3	.368	1	12	13-16	1 (.979)

- Leads team in triples (5) and sac. bunts (12), 2nd in stolen bases (13) and 3rd in runs scored (34).

- **Situational Hitting:** leads team in pct. of runners advanced (.639), 2nd in batting with runners in scoring position (.360), 3rd in 2-out batting (.333) ... also .273 leadoff on-base pct., 1-for-2 with bases loaded.

- **WVU Series:** 3-for-8 (.375), R, BB, 2 SAC, 1-1 SB.

- Recent **Trends:** no multi-hit games in last 7 GP (5-for-20).

- **'03 BIG EAST Games:** .306 (19-for-62), 16 R, 10 RBI, 4 3B, 7 BB, K, 6 SAC, 6-7 SB.

- Leads BIG EAST in overall triples, 10th in stolen bases (13).

- Owns 10 multi-hit and five multi-RBI games.

- Made switch to CF and **2-hole** (32 starts batting 2nd) on Spring Break trip, **shifted to LF** in last 19 games

- His go-ahead single in 11th inning to plate Steve Sollmann for 2-1 win over Vanderbilt.

(3) Matt Edwards (So., 3B/1B; Mechanicsville, VA)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'02	.290	9/8	31	3	9	1-0-0	4	10/.323	3	1	6	1	.371	0	0	1-1	6 (.806)
'03	.365	47/47	170	28	62	13-1-7	55	98/.576	19	4	25	6	.431	4	0	2-5	6 (.979)
Tot.	.353	56/55	201	31	71	14-1-7	59	108/.537	22	5	31	7	.422	4	0	3-6	12 (.961)

- Leads team in slugging pct. (.576), RBI (55), home runs (7) an total bases (98), 2nd in batting avg. (.365), on-base pct. (.431) and hits (62), 3rd in doubles (12).
- **Situational Hitting:** leads team in 2-out batting (.418), 2-out RBI (14) and batting with runners in scoring position (.408), 2nd in pct. of runners advanced (.606), 4th in leadoff on-base pct. (.394) ... also 1-for-2 with the bases loaded
- **WVU Series:** led team with 5-for-9 (.556) batting (RBI, R, BB, HBP, 2 Ks, E)
- Recent **Trends:** 5-for-7 in last two games after 0-for-9 drought
- **'03 BIG EAST Games:** team-best .375 (24-for-64), 11 R, 23 RBI, 3 HR, 3B, 5 2B, 8 BB, 10 Ks, E
- **Leads BIG EAST** in overall **RBI**, plus 3rd in TBs, 7th in 2Bs, 8th in hits and slugging, 9th in HRs.
- Nearly has surpassed ND's 2002 leading RBI total (59, by Andrew Bushey).
- Already has totaled team-best **17 multi-RBI** games, including five 3-RBI games, 4 RBI in second game vs. Georgetown and 5 RBI in third game vs. Creighton.
- Also second on team with **19 multi-hit** games (five 3-hit games, plus 4-for-5 in nightcap at St. John's).
- **BIG EAST player of the week** (3/31-4/6) after leading ND during 4-0 week in hits and batting average (9-for-14, .643), RBI (10) home runs (3), total bases (21) and slugging pct. (1.500), plus 7 R, 2 BB, 3B, SB and just one K ... hit 6-for-9 in doubleheader sweep at St. John's, with five RBI and a pair of booming HRs to dead-center field.
- Has made 28 starts at 1B, with the first coming on Spring Break trip, with 33 total starts batting 3-hole (10 at cleanup).
- Missed most of 2002 season due to broken leg (vs. USC in Round Rock, ninth game of '02).

(4) Kris Billmaier (Sr., RF; Woodinville, WA ... team tri-captain with Steve Sollmann and J.P. Gagne)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'00	.354	33/21	82	18	29	3-0-4	19	44/.537	8	1	10	0	.413	1	0	0-2	0 (.000)
'01	.257	56/55	183	34	47	9-0-3	37	65/.355	30	9	15	0	.382	3	2	4-6	2 (.970)
'02	.313	65/62	230	34	72	8-1-3	41	91/.396	14	7	33	4	.369	1	11	2-2	8 (.927)
'03	.279	48/47	179	31	50	14-1-4	36	78/.436	16	4	18	5	.341	6	2	1-1	1 (.989)
Tot.	.294	202/185	674	117	198	34-2-14	133	278/.412	68	21	76	9	.371	11	15	7-11	11 (.959)

- Leads team in doubles (14) and sac. flies (6), 2nd in RBI (36) and home runs (4), 3rd in hits (50), 4th in total bases (89) and walks (16), 5th in slugging pct. (.436).
- **Situational Hitting:** 2nd on team in 2-out RBI (13), with .395 leadoff on-base pct., 5th in 2-out batting (.297) ... also .294 batter with runners in scoring position, 2-for-6 with bases loaded.
- **Career vs. Rutgers:** .171 (6-for-35), 11 GS, 6 R, 6 RBI, 5 BB, 4 Ks.
- **WVU Series:** 1-for-11 (.091), K, after batting 2-for-8 in UConn series
- Recent **Trends:** hitting just .240 (6-for-25) in last eight games (2 R, 4 RBI)
- **'03 BIG EAST Games:** .231 (15-for-65), 6 R, 9 RBI, HR, 5 2B, 7 BB, 6 Ks, E
- Ranks fifth in BIG EAST with 14 doubles.
- 3rd on team with **15 multi-hit** game 2nd with **nine multi-RBI** games.
- Recently became 16th ND player ever to log 200 career games (now 202).
- Made switch from right to CF in last 16 games ... has hit **cleanup** in 29 games this season (5-hole in seven).
- Home run vs. Seton Hall (4/19) was his first HR since second game of '03 vs. Newman.

(5) Javi Sanchez (Jr., C; Miami, FL)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'01	.000	9/2	13	0	0	0-0-0	0	0/.000	1	0	2	0	.071	0	0	0-0	1
'02	.281	66/65	231	50	65	7-3-5	29	93/.403	24	5	32	3	.360	1	8	1-1	28 (.902)
'03	.277	43/43	155	31	43	10-1-1	18	58/.374	14	6	13	1	.358	1	0	5-5	5 (.985)
Tot.	.271	118/110	399	81	108	17-4-6	47	151/.378	39	11	47	4	.350	2	8	6-6	34 (.946)

- Third on team in hit-by-pitch (6), 4th in stolen bases (5) and 5th in doubles (10).
- **Situational Hitting:** fifth on team in batting with runners on base (.315; 44 points above overall avg.) ... also .218 batter with 2 outs (just 2 RBI with 2 outs), .279 batter with runners in scoring position, has reached in 36% of leadoff plate appearances, 1-for-4 with bases loaded.
- **Career vs. Rutgers:** .190 (4-for-21), 6 GS, 3 R, 2 RBI, HR, 2 BB, 5 Ks, 1-1 SB.
- **WVU Series:** 0-for-10, HBP, 2 Ks.
- Recent **Trends:** hitting just .125 (3-for-24) in last eight games (4 R, 0 RBI).
- **'03 BIG EAST Games:** .197 (12-for-61), 11 R, 4 RBI, 3B, 2B, 6 BB, 4 HBP, 3 Ks.
- Owns **14 multi-hit** games in 2003, with **four multi-RBI** games.
- Has hit five of his six career **home runs** with the Irish **away from home**, including in 4-3 loss to RU at 2002 BET.
- Owns **more walks (14) than Ks (13)** in 2003.
- **Prep 2B** who started at SS in 2002 after injuries to Matt Macri and Matt Edwards

(6) Matt Macri (So., SS; Clive, IA ... preseason All-American)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'02	.206	17/16	68	10	14	3-0-1	13	20/.294	7	0	24	0	.273	2	0	1-2	1.000
'03	.312	45/45	157	34	49	14-4-3	23	80/.510	20	5	35	0	.407	0	5	5-8	13 (.937)
Tot.	.280	62/61	225	44	63	17-4-4	36	100/.444	27	5	59	0	.367	2	5	6-10	14 (.940)

- Leads team in doubles (14), 2nd in walks (20) and triples (4), 3rd in slugging (.510), runs (34) and sac. bunts (5), 4th in hits (49), home runs (3), total bases (80), hit-by-pitch (5) and stolen bases (5), 5th in batting (.312) and on-base (.407).
- **Situational Hitting:** second on team in batting with runners on (.368; 56 points above his overall avg.) ... also a .288 batter with runners in scoring position, .255 with 2 outs (8 RBI), owns .310 leadoff on-base pct., 1-for-2 with bases loaded.
- **WVU Series:** 3-for-10, 2 R, 2 2B, 2 BB, 6 Ks, E (after batting 2-for-11 in UConn series).
- Recent **Trends:** has hits in seven of last nine games (.354, 11-for-31) ... one error in last eight games (35 E-free gms).
- '03 **BIG EAST** Games: .279 (17-for-61), 13 R, 5 RBI, HR, 2 3B, 8 2B, 9 BB, 18 Ks, 4 Es.
- Ranks 5th among BIG EAST players in doubles, 4th in triples.
- Fourth on team with **15 multi-hit** games, plus **four multi-RBI** games.
- Has made most of his starts batting in the 6-hole (19, also 13 in 7-hole), after opening season as leadoff hitter.
- Missed most of 2002 season due to "**Tommy John**" reconstructive elbow **surgery**.
- Nation's No. 2-rated college SS prospect for 2003 draft (per *Baseball America* preview issue).

(7) Cody Rizzo (Fr., DH/LF; Temecula, CA)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'03	.324	42/41	142	41	46	9-1-3	29	66/.465	6	22	26	6	.428	3	1	1-2	3 (.964)

- Leads team in hit-by-pitch (22), 2nd in runs (41), 3rd in batting avg. (.324), RBI (29) and home runs (3), 4th in slugging pct. (.465), 5th in hits (46) and total bases (66).
- **Situational Hitting:** 2nd on team in leadoff on-base pct. (.511), 5th in batting with runners in scoring position (.308) ... also a .238 batter with 2 outs (10 RBI), 2-for-7 with bases loaded.
- **WVU Series:** 2-for-9 (.222), 2 RBI, 2 HBP, K (after 2-for-9 in the UConn series).
- Recent **Trends:** hitting just .280 (7-for-25, R, 4 RBI) in last eight games.
- '03 **BIG EAST** Games: .309 (17-for-55), 17 R, 10 RBI, HR, 3B, 3 2B, 4 BB, 9 HBP, 9 Ks, 2 Es.
- Ranks 10th among BIG EAST players with 41 runs scored.
- Classic **utility player** who has made starts at CF (4), LF (13), DH (6) and C (3) and now RF (16), also batting in leadoff spot early in season (his most common lineup spot has been 15 games in the 7-hole).
- Third on team with **eight multi-RBI** games and **15 multi-hit** efforts.
- Excellent baserunner and rare **2-sport star in soccer/baseball** as a prep (California HS soccer is played in the fall).

(8) Steve Andres (Fr., DH; Napa, CA)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'03	.258	30/20	62	17	16	1-2-2	12	27/.435	11	8	12	2	.427	1	0	0-1	1 (.978)

- 2nd on team in hit-by-pitch (8), 4th in on-base pct. (.427).
- **Situational Hitting:** 4th on team in 2-out batting (.300), 5th in pct. of runners advanced (.564).
- **WVU Series:** did not play (0-for-1 vs. UConn).
- Recent **Trends:** Has totaled just two hits in team's last 20 games (14 ABs), after 5-for-10 in previous three-game stretch.
- '03 **BIG EAST** Games: .214 (3-for-14), 3 R, 3 RBI, 6 BB, 2 HBP, 3 Ks.
- Owns **four multi-hit** and **two multi-RBI** games.
- Sparked offense in first three games vs. Dayton, Newman and ASU (6-for-11, 2 RBI, 7 RBI, HR, 3B, 2B).

or Matt Bransfield (Fr., IF/DH; Englewood, CO)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'03	.298	24/10	47	10	14	3-0-0	6	17/.362	2	2	12	1	.340	2	1	0-0	1.000

- **WVU Series:** 0-for-8, RBI, BB, K, SF ... after 6-game hit streak (9-for-17, 6 R, 9 RBI)
- '03 **BIG EAST** Games: .294 (5-for-17), 3 R, 3 RBI, 3 2B, 2 BB, 2 Ks
- Owns **four multi-hit** and **two multi-RBI** games, despite making just 10 starts.

or Craig Cooper (Fr., LF/DH; Plainview, NY)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'03	.314	36/25	102	20	32	5-2-0	13	41/.402	12	2	21	2	.397	0	1	8-11	1.000

- **WVU Series:** did not play (just 2-for-9 in team's last 16 games, with 5 GP).
- '03 **BIG EAST** Games: .409 (9-for-22), 6 R, 3 RBI, 4 BB, 4 Ks, 1-2 SB
- 3rd on team in stolen bases (8), 4th in batting avg. (.314), 5th in leadoff on-base pct. (.391)
- Owns **seven multi-hit** and **four multi-RBI** games.

(9) Greg Lopez (Fr., 3B; Upper Arlington, OH)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'03	.254	40/35	114	15	29	1-0-0	25	30/.263	3	4	18	5	.293	2	6	1-4	6 (.927)

- Second on team in sac. bunts (2), 5th in RBI (25).
- **Situational Hitting:** 4th on team in batting with runners in scoring position (.312) and pct. of runners advanced (.597) ... also .318 leadoff on-base pct., .222 batting with 2 outs, 1-for-6 with bases loaded.
- **WVU Series:** 0-for-8, 2 Ks, E.
- Recent **Trends:** hitless in last four games (0-for-11).
- '03 **BIG EAST** Games: .278 (10-for-36), 8 R, 9 RBI, 2B, 3 BB, 4 Ks, E
- Effective situational hitter who has 25 RBI, despite totaling just 29 hits.
- Has made 31 starts at third base, with **seven multi-hit** and **six multi-RBI** games (5th-best on team).

NOTES FROM LAST WEEK'S WVU SERIES – WVU joined St. John's as the only teams ever to win two BIG EAST series versus Notre Dame, with the Irish dropping a BIG EAST series for just the eighth time in eight BIG EAST seasons. It marked only the fourth time that ND has lost a home BIG EAST series and the first time since St. John's won 2-of-3 at Eck Stadium in 1998 ... ND's three errors in the WVU series finale were its most Es in 26 games, leading to the three unearned runs ... the Irish left 19 runners on base in the WVU series ... WVU entered the series ranked 6th in the nation with a .360 team batting average (also 28th in scoring, with 7.8 runs/gm) but the ND pitchers held WVU to .215 batting (20-for-92) and just 12 total runs in the series ... the three home runs in the series (giving WVU 63 for the season) played key roles in both WVU wins, with Stan Posluszny's 2-run shot providing the final margin in Saturday's 7-5 game ... the ND offense managed to hit just .200 in the series (17-for-85) with seven runs scored ... the Irish had their chances to battle back in various situational hitting opportunities but ND hit 0-for-4 in the series with the bases loaded, 2-for-24 with two outs (.083) and 4-for-21 (.190) with runners in scoring position (the Irish also had a runner on third and less than two outs 10 times, plating the run on just four of those prime RBI chances) ... the ND staff posted a 3.24 staff ERA in the series to go along with the .215 opponent batting average (plus 23 Ks and just 5 walks).

LOFTY LOFTERS – The 6-foot-7 Tom Thornton (1.66, 4-1, 11 GP/7 GS, 43.1 IP, .264 opp. avg., 22 Ks, 13 BB, 42 H, 3 WP, 5 HB) and the 7-foot-1 Ryan Doherty (2.45, 2-0, 10 GP/1 GS, 18.1 IP, .200 opp. avg., 31 Ks, 6 BB, 13 H) have combined for the following impressive numbers in their rookie season: 1.90 ERA, 6-1 record in 21 appearances (8 starts) and 61.2 IP, .246 opp. avg., 53 Ks, 19 BB, 55 H ... Doherty is averaging 15.2 Ks per 9 IP, with his nine outings since the opener vs. Dayton (0.2 IP, 5 R, 4 H, 2 BB) including an 0.00 ERA, a .150 opp. avg. and nearly an 8-to-1 K-to-walk ratio (31/4) in those 17.2 IP.

MAINIERI HITS WIN NO. 700 – Ninth-year ND head coach **Paul Mainieri** – now in his 21st overall season – picked up his 700th career coaching victory in the 6-2 series-opening win over Georgetown on Sat., March 29, just 135 games removed from his 600th win (ND's 99 combined wins in '01 and '02 were third-most in nation, behind Florida State's 107 and South Carolina's 106) ... Mainieri's **722-433-1 career record** (.625) includes 180-121 at St. Thomas ('83-'88), 152-158 at Air Force ('89-'94) and 390-154-1 (.717) at ND ('95-'03), with his 400th win at ND suddenly 12 Ws away ... his ND career includes five BIG EAST titles and five NCAA trips with the Irish ('96, '99-'02), the program's first No. 1 ranking in 2001 and first CWS trip since '57 (in '02) ... he was the nation's only coach to repeat as ABCA regional coach of the year (Midwest), in 2002, and his squads have extended ND's streak of seasons with 40-plus wins to 14 (nation's 4th-longest active streak) ... 31 of his ND players have moved on to pro ball, including 12 drafted in the first 10 rounds and pair of first-round pitchers (Brad Lidge in '98, Aaron Heilman in '01) ... every ND player in the Mainieri era who has completed his eligibility with the Irish has graduated from Notre Dame (46 of 46) while the eight who were signed after their junior seasons have returned to complete or near completion of their graduation requirements (including two-time Academic All-American Brian Stavisky) ... Mainieri owns the best BIG EAST winning pct. in the conference's history (.750, 135-45) ... in 71 BIG EAST series spanning eight seasons, the Irish have won 55 with eight splits and just eight series wins by the opponent (just two of them being 3-game sweeps) ... the Irish have been swept just four times in 69 all-time BIG EAST doubleheaders (42 ND sweeps, 23 splits).

TWO-YEAR TEAR – Notre Dame's combined victory total from the 2001 (49-13-1) and 2002 (50-18) seasons represented the third-most wins (99) in Division I baseball during that two-year span, trailing only Florida State (107) and South Carolina (106) ... ND's three-year **record from 2001-03 now stands at 135-43-1 (.757)**.

EVEN STEVEN – Notre Dame's scoring dominance in the 2nd inning this season (55-8) has nearly been matched by the team's scoring edge two innings later in the 4th (44-17) ... the Irish now have been outscored in only one inning, the 7th (23-33).

WINNING BIG & SMALL – Notre Dame is 9-1 this season in one-run games while already posting 19 "big wins" (margin of five-plus runs) ... by comparison, the 2002 ND team was 9-8 in one-run games and totaled 21 wins by 5-plus runs.

ND ALUMS EMBARK ON PRO SEASONS – Three former Notre Dame baseball players were on 40-man rosters for MLB Spring Training: IF **Craig Counsell** (Arizona), RHP **Brad Lidge** (Houston) and LHP **Tim Kalita** (Detroit) ... Counsell and Lidge both made the big-league rosters (Kalita is with the double-A Erie Sea Wolves) ... three others were non-roster invitees to Big-League Camp: RHPs **Aaron Heilman** (rated by *Baseball America* as the No. 3 prospect in the New York Mets organization; with triple-A Norfolk Tides) and **Christian Parker** (Yankees; triple-A Columbus Clippers) and LHP **Chris Michalak** (Colorado Springs Sky Sox) ... several other former ND players have embarked on their minor-league seasons: catcher **Paul O'Toole** (Cubs; single-A Daytona), 3B/C **Andrew Bushey** (Colorado, single-A Asheville Tourists), Oakland A's OFs **Steve Stanley** (double-A Midland, Rockhounds) and **Brian Stavisky** (single-A Kane County Cougars), IF **Brant Ust** (Detroit; double-A Erie), RHP **Danny Tamayo** (Kansas City; double-A Wichita Wranglers) and OF **Matt Bok** (Los Angeles, single-A Ogden Raptors) ... Tamayo and Stanley both are competing in the Texas League while Heilman and Parker both are pitchers in the International League ... here's a look at ND's alums currently in pro ball (stats as of May 9):

Matt Bok, C (Ogden Raptors, Dodgers single-A, Pioneer League)

Andrew Bushey, C/IF (Asheville Tourists, Rockies single-A, South Atlantic League)
0-for-8, 4 GP, RBI, 3 BB, K, three starts at C, one at 1B

Craig Counsell, IF (Arizona Diamondbacks, has split time at 2B, SS and 3B)
.276 (32-for-116), 31 GP, HR, 3B, 4 2B, 18 R, 10 RBI, 20 BB, 16 Ks, 5-7 SB, .353 slug, .387 OB, .991 field. pct. (1 E)

Aaron Heilman, RHP (Norfolk Tides, Mets AAA, International League)
4-2, 2.77 ERA, 8 GS, 48.2 IP, .234 opp. batting avg. (41-for-175), 15 R, 4 HR, 17 BB, 40 Ks (0-for-2 batting, K)

Tim Kalita, LHP (Erie Sea Wolves, Tigers AA, Eastern League)
0-1, 8.05 ERA, 8 GP/4 GS, 19.0 IP, .357 opp. avg. (20-for-57), 18 R/17 ER, 10 BB, 9 Ks, 4 WP, HB

Brad Lidge, RHP (Houston Astros)
3-0, SV, 3 hld, 1.80 ERA, 15 GP, 20 IP, .179 opp. avg. (12-67), 4 R, 10 BB, 22 Ks, 4 HB, .239 opp. slug, .307 opp. OB

Chris Michalak, LHP (Colorado Springs Sky Sox, Rockies AAA, Pacific Coast League)
3-3, 3.27 ERA, 3 GS, 44 IP, .255 opp. avg. (42-for-165), 26 R/16 ER, 25 BB, 30 Ks ... also has hit 2-for-10 (2 RBI, R)

Paul O'Toole, C/IF/OF (Daytona Cubs, Cubs single-A, Florida State League)
.275 (11-for-40), 13 GP, 4 R, 2 2B, 5 RBI, 2 SAC, 7 BB, 8 Ks, HBP, .325 slug, .396 OB, 2 E ... 4 starts at C, 2 at 3B

Christian Parker, RHP (Columbus Clippers, Yankees AAA, International League)
0-3, 7.80 ERA, 3 GS, 15.0 IP, .344 opp. avg. (22-for-64), 15 R/13 ER, 8 BB, 9 Ks, WP, HR

Steve Stanley, OF (Midland Rockhounds, Athletics AA, Texas League)
.321 (36-112), 30 GP, 17 R, 2 2B, 14 RBI, 3 SAC, 16 BB, 14 Ks, 1-2 SB, 2 Es, .339 slug, .403 OB, 29 starts (all in OF)

Brian Stavisky, OF (Kane County Cougars, Oakland single-A, Midwest League)
.275 (25-for-91), 27 GP, 13 R, 10 RBI, 3B, 4 2B, 2 SAC, 2 HBP, 14 BB, 20 Ks, .341 slug, .383 OB, E, 7 starts in OF

Danny Tamayo, RHP (Wichita Wranglers, Royals AA, Texas League)
1-4, 4.60 ERA, 6 GS, 29.1 IP, .296 opp. avg. (34-for-115), 18 R/15 ER, 15 BB, 19 Ks, HR, 7 WP, BK

Brant Ust, IF (Erie Sea Wolves, Tigers AA, Eastern League)
.237 (18-76), 22 GP, 7 R, 11 RBI, 2 HR, 7 2B, 2 BB, 14 Ks, SB, .434 slug, .256 OB, 4 E, SS (9), 2B (8), 3B (2), OF (1)

EXPECTING ECK'S-ELLENCENCE – The 11-0 loss to Rutgers on May 5, 2002, ended ND's team-record scoring streak at 231 games ... the Irish then went **unbeaten in 19 consecutive games at Eck Stadium after that loss to Rutgers**, outscoring the opponents 218-88 in those games (average score of 12-5) ... ND now is **40-6 in its last 46 home games**, dating back to the 7-5 loss to Pittsburgh on April 11, 2002 ... now celebrating its 10th year of play at Eck Stadium, the Irish own an all-time record of 239-54 in the facility (.816) ... ND had defeated 21 consecutive non-conference teams that visited The Eck before the recent loss to Eastern Michigan.

STRONG UP THE MIDDLE – Notre Dame boasts the only pair of middle infielders who each received 2003 preseason All-America honors, with junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** earning a second-team nod from the National College Baseball Writers Association while sophomore SS **Matt Macri** (who saw most of his freshman season cut short by an elbow injury that ultimately required "Tommy John" reconstructive surgery) was a *Baseball America* third team preseason All-American ... *BA* and the BIG EAST coaches forecasted Sollmann as the 2003 BIG EAST player of the year while *Collegiate Baseball* magazine predicted Macri for that honor ... three other 2B and five SS were named to at least one of the three major preseason All-America teams (which featured 10 total middle infielders) ... Southern University 2B Rickie Weeks and Florida State SS Stephen Drew were unanimous first-team picks (also *CB*) while Texas 2B Tim Moss was the only other middle infielder named to all three teams ... middle infielders cited on two of the preseason teams also included Georgia Tech SS Eric Patterson, Eastern Michigan 2B Brian Bixler and Louisiana State SS Aaron Hill ... two other shortstops – Richmond's David Reaver and USC's Anthony Lunetta – also received preseason All-America honors.

NOTRE DAME BASEBALL 2003 PRESEASON HONORS AND RANKINGS

John Axford (So., RHP) – Nation's #19 college prospect (11th pitcher) for 2004 draft (*Baseball America*/Perfect Game, 12/15/02), BIG EAST's #5 overall prospect (*BA*)

Craig Cooper (Fr., CF) – BIG EAST's #2 newcomer and nation's #50 newcomer (*BA*)

Matt Macri (So., SS) – Preseason third team All-American (*BA*), preseason BIG EAST player of the year (*Collegiate Baseball*), nation's #40 college prospect (#2 among SS) for 2003 draft (*BA*/Perfect Game, 12/15/02), preseason all-BE (*BA*), BE's #3 overall prospect and best IF arm (*BA*)

Chris Niesel (So. RHP) – Preseason all-BIG EAST (*BA*), nation's #49 college prospect for 2004 draft (*BA*/Perfect Game, 12/15/02), preseason all-BIG EAST (*BA*), BE's #6 overall prospect, best breaking ball (*BA*)

Steve Sollmann (Jr., 2B) – Preseason second team All-American (National College Baseball Writers), preseason BIG EAST player of the year (BIG EAST coaches and *BA*), #124 college prospect for 2003 draft (*BA*/PG, 12/15/02), preseason all-BIG EAST (coaches; *BA*), BE's #7 overall prospect (*BA*), best defensive 2B (*BA*)

Joe Thaman (Jr., 1B) – BIG EAST's best defensive 1B (*Baseball America*)

Martin Vergara (So., RHP) - Nation's #78 college prospect for 2004 draft (*BA*/Perfect Game, 12/15/02), BIG EAST's #8 overall prospect (*BA*)

Grant Johnson (So., RHP; inj.) – Nation's #5 college prospect for 2004 draft (*BA*/PG, 12/15/02), preseason third team All-American (*Collegiate Baseball*, NCBWA), preseason all-BIG EAST (coaches, *BA*), BE's #1 prospect and best control pitcher (*BA*)

ELITE E.R.A. – Notre Dame – which entered the week ranked 14th in the nation for ERA – has finished in the top-16 of the national charts for team ERA in four of the previous five seasons, owning the nation's best team ERA during portions of 2000 and '01 ... the 2000 staff surged atop the national ERA charts in late April (2.72) and finished 16th (3.93) ... the Irish then returned to the top spot among the 2001 team ERA leaders for three weeks in April, finishing fifth at 3.22 (best at ND since '92, third-best since '75) ... ND went on to finish 13th in the 2002 ERA rankings (3.57), joining Texas and Rice as the only teams ranked among the nation's top-20 ERA leaders in 2000, '01 and '02 ... the Irish also finished 12th in the final 1998 team ERA rankings (4.02) while the first eight ND staffs led by pitching coach **Brian O'Connor** ('95-'02) averaged a 4.10 team ERA.

APRIL SHOWERS OF WINS – Notre Dame has dominated in April during the nine-year Paul Mainieri era (**178-40**, .817), including **58-8** (.879) in April during the past three seasons (20-2 in '01, 19-2 in '02, 19-4 in '03) ... ND's only April losses in that stretch: vs. Ball State (3-4) and Valparaiso (3-7) in '01, vs. St. John's (3-4) and Pittsburgh (5-7) in '02, and vs. Eastern Michigan, Pittsburgh, BSU and Michigan in '03.

BIG-INNING BOPPERS – Notre Dame opened the season by posting three "big innings" (5-plus runs) in the first four games but then went 16 games without 5-plus runs in any inning ... that drought ended with a vengeance in games 21-29, when the Irish erupted for 10 big innings (in all but one of those games, the finale of the Georgetown series) ... the team's big inning total now strands at **17**, including **four in the last 12 games** ... by comparison, the **2002 team totaled just one more big inning** (18) in 68 games played, with seven of those coming in the final week of the regular season (4) and the NCAA Regional (3) ... the big innings in 2003 have included two 9-run eruptions (vs. Georgetown and Detroit), three 7-run innings (at ASU, and then last week vs. Cleveland State and UConn) and 6-run innings vs. Newman, St. John's and IPFW ... the **6th inning has produced five "big innings"**, with four in the 2nd, two in the 3rd and 4th one each in the 1st, 5th, 7th and 8th – with the Irish failing to post 5-plus runs in only the 9th inning this season ... the big innings in the three midweek games on April 8-9 accounted for 18 of ND's 23 total runs (78%) in those games