

**2003 NOTRE DAME BASEBALL****Irish Set To Conclude Season-Opening Road Stretch with BIG EAST Series vs. Villanova**

The Notre Dame baseball team (9-5) – ranked as high as 19th in the national polls – is slated to conclude its season-opening road stretch with a three-game BIG EAST series vs. Villanova, at the Wildcats' new home park (Villanova Ballpark, at Plymouth Community Center) ... the series was shifted to a Sunday (March 23, noon DH) and Monday (11:00 a.m.) format to wet field conditions ... the Irish have won seven of their last eight games, including a 6-1 showing during Spring Break at the Kennel Club Classic in Jacksonville, Fla. (with the lone loss coming in extra innings at Jacksonville University) ... ND's starting pitcher rotation (in order) is scheduled to include sophomore RHPs Chris Niesel and John Axford and senior RHPs Ryan Kalita (senior RHP Peter Ogilvie is sidelined with a sore shoulder) ... the Irish – coming off a landmark 2002 season that ended with a trip to the College World Series (the program's first CWS appearance since '57) – played four games vs. teams ranked in the top 20 (three in the top seven) during the first two weeks of the season ... 9th-year ND head coach Paul Mainieri is nearing the 700-win milestone for his career (he is 695-426-1, in 21 seasons).

**FOLLOWING THE ACTION** – ESPN Radio 1620 (WDND) and its sister station WDNV 1490 AM again will provide commercial broadcasts of the entire ND season ... bonus gametracker "live stats" will not be available for the Villanova series, due to limited phone-line availability (check und.com main page for links when applicable).

**EARLY HONORS** – Junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** was named BIG EAST player of the week after hitting 8-for-17 (.471) in the season-opening four games, then earned it again after batting .478 (11-for-23) in the final six games of the Kennel Club Classic ... senior RHP **J.P. Gagne** (6 shutout IP) was named BIG EAST pitcher of the week for his win in the 13-inning game vs. #7 Wake Forest at Minnesota's DQ Classic, with sophomore RHP **Chris Niesel** picking up the award for his strong 8 IP vs. Eastern Illinois (0 E, 2 H, 2 BB, 9 Ks).

**NOTRE DAME'S PROBABLE STARTING LINEUP** \* – lefthanded hitter

Pos.	Player	Yr.	Ht./Wt.	Hometown	2003 Stats and Notes
2B	Steve Sollmann	Jr.	5-10/190	Cincinnati, OH	.429, 8 RBI, HR-2 3B-2 2B, 15 R, 7 BB, 3 Ks, 3 SAC, 9-11 SB, 1 E 2-time BIG EAST player of the week; owns .369 career batting avg. (5th in ND history)
CF	*Brennan Grogan	Fr.	6-2/170	Tequesta, FL	.270, 5 RBI, 3B, 8 R, BB, 2 SAC, 6 Ks, HBP, 3-3 SB Made switch to CF and 2-hole on Spring trip; gamewinning triple vs. Vanderbilt (3-1 in 13)
1B	Matt Edwards	So.	6-2/195	Mechanicsville, VA	.392, 13 RBI, HR-4 2B, 9 R, 3 BB, 3 HBP, 7 Ks, SF, 0-2 SB, 3 Es Missed most of 2002 season with broken leg; started final two games of Spring trip at 1B
RF	Kris Billmaier	Sr.	5-10/205	Woodinville, WA	.361, 9 RBI, 3 HR-3B-5 2B, 12 R, 2 BB, HBP, 6 Ks, 2 SF Career .471 hitter in NCAAAs (33-for-70, 17 RBI); hit .3 HRs in first two games of '03
C	Javi Sanchez	Jr.	6-2/200	Miami, FL	.333, 7 RBI, HR-3 2B, 6 R, 4 BB, HBP, 6 Ks, SF, 1-1 SB, 4 Es, 3 PB Converted IF; .301 career hitter on road (.243 at home); hit .313 in '02 postseason (2 HR)
SS	Matt Macri	So.	6-2/195	Clive, IA	.200, 7 RBI, HR-4 2B, 8 R, 4 BB, 8 Ks, 2 HBP, 2 SAC, 1-1 SB, 6 Es Limited mostly to early DH duty in '02 (elbow inj.); nation's #40 prospect (#2 SS) for '03 draft
DH	Cody Rizzo	Fr.	6-1/180	Temecula, CA	.306, 5 RBI, HR-3 2B, 6 R, 11 Ks, 5 HBP Accomplished prep baseball (.501, 6 HR, 19 SB) and soccer player
LF	Craig Cooper	Fr.	6-2/195	Plainview, NY	.256, 6 RBI, 3 2B, 5 R, 3 BB, 9 Ks, 4-6 SB Gold Glove award-winner as a prep (hit .380 in '02, 5 HR, 10 SB)
3B	Greg Lopez	Fr.	6-0/175	Upper Arlington, OH	.267, 4 RBI, 8 R, HBP, 4 Ks, SF, 0-1 SB, 2 Es Ohio co-state player of the year in '02 (.484, 32 RBI, 5 HR, 14 2B, 14 SB)

**The Bench**

1B	*Joe Thaman	Jr.	6-4/215	St. Louis, MO	.205, 7 RBI, 3 2B, 3 R, 2 BB, 16 Ks Hit .354 at Eck Stadium in '02 (22 RBI, 28 R); grand slams in back-to-back games vs. BC
DH	*Steve Andres	Fr.	5-11/205	Napa, CA	.259, 3 RBI, HR-3B-2B, 9 R, 3 BB, 7 Ks, 3 HBP Last-minute walk-on and 4th-gen. ND student (GGF William Andres played baseball, '17-'19)
OF	Alex Nettey	Fr.	6-1/180	Dolton, IL	.273, R, K ... one of six Illinois natives on 2003 squad
IF	Tim Murray	Jr.	6-2/180	Shrub Oak, IL	.200, R, K, E ... walk-on addition as utility infielder
1B	Matt Bransfield	Fr.	6-1/195	Englewood, CO	.100, 5 Ks ... starred as prep 3B, RHP and football QB

**NOTRE DAME'S PROBABLE PITCHING ROTATION**

Pos.	Player	Yr.	Ht./Wt.	Hometown	2003 Stats and Notes
RHP	Chris Niesel	So.	5-11/195	Plantation, FL	3.46, 1-0, 26 IP, 3 GS, 21 Ks, 5 BB, 20 H (.198 opp. avg.), 3 WP, 2 HB, HR 23-2 in last 25 overall dec.; BIG EAST pitcher of week (8 IP, 0 ER, 2 H, 2 BB, 9 Ks vs. EIU)
RHP	John Axford	So.	6-5/180	Port Dover, ONT	2.62, 24 IP, 4 GS (3-0), 20 Ks, 7 BB, 23 H (.258 opp. avg.), 5 WP, HB, HR Averaging just 2.6 BB per 9 IP (7.5 in '02); 7th-rd Seattle draft pick ('01)
RHP	Ryan Kalita	Sr.	6-2/210	Oak Park, IL	4.50, 14 IP, 3 GP/2 GS (1-0), 9 Ks, 10 BB, 13 H (.265 opp. avg.), 3 WP, 3 HB, BK Beat RU in '02 BIG EAST title game (7 shutout IP); 8-0 career record (5-0, 3.16 in '02)

**The Bullpen**

RHP	J.P. Gagne	Sr.	6-0/205	Bloomington, MN	4.97, 12.2 IP, 7 GP, 2-2, 3 SV, 9 Ks, 5 BB, 15 H (.288 opp. avg.), 2 HR Could become third all-time ND pitcher with 20-plus wins (23-12) and 10-plus saves (9)
LHP	Tom Thornton	Fr.	6-6/205	Middleboro, NJ	0.79, 11.1 IP, 4 GP/1 GS, 1-0, K, 4 BB, 9 H (.231 opp. avg.), 3 HB Won start vs. Navy (4 shutout IP); prep career: 1.09, 19-4, 147.2 IP, 236 Ks, 48 BB, 26 H
RHP	Brandon Vioria	Sr.	5-11/210	Wailuku, HI	0.00, 1-0, 6.2 IP, 5 GP, 3 Ks, 0 BB, 2 H (.095), retired 19 of 21 batters faced Career walk avg. (1.47/9 IP) is ND record, 6th in career ERA (2.67), 1 career WP, 4 HB
RHP	Martin Vergara	So.	6-0/185	Paterson, NJ	12.00, 6 IP, 3 GP, 2 Ks, 5 BB, 6 H (.250 opp. avg.), 2 WP, HB, 2 HR Posted key '02 wins over USC and WVU; '02: 3.79, 5-1, 35.2 IP, 33 Ks, 17 BB, .236 opp. avg.
RHP	Matt Laird	Sr.	6-0/185	Bellaire, TX	12.27, 3.2 IP, 4 GP, 2 Ks, 7 BB, 5 H (.357 opp. avg.), 3 WP, HB, HR Served as closer on 2001 squad that claimed nation's No. 1 ranking
RHP	Ryan Doherty	Fr.	7-1/230	Toms River, NJ	13.50, 3.1 IP, 3 GP, 6 Ks, 4 BB, 6 H (.400 opp. avg.), WP, HB N.J. '02 player of the year; career at T.R. East HS: 1.22, 15-5, 185 Ks, 31 BB
RHP	Tyler Jones	So.	6-4/205	Arlington, TX	6.00, 3.0 IP, 1 GP (vs. Navy), 5 Ks, 5 H (.357) Named all-Jayhawk League with Hays Larks in summer of 2002 (3.58, 5-1, 39 Ks)

## NOTRE DAME BASEBALL 2003 SCHEDULE

### FEBRUARY

Fri.	21	vs. Dayton (at ASU)	W, 10-9
Sat.	22	vs. Newman (at ASU)	W, 15-5
Sat.	22	at #4 Arizona St. (KAZ-TV)	L, 3-16
Sun.	23	at #4 Arizona St. (KAZ-TV)	L, 8-14
Fri.	28	vs. #16 Nebraska	L, 1-7

### MARCH

Sat.	1	vs. Minnesota (Fox Sp. No.)	L, 2-8
Sun.	2	vs. #7 Wake Forest	W, 2-1 (13)
Sat.	8	vs. Vanderbilt (@UNF)	W, 3-1 (11)
Mon.	10	vs. Navy (@UNF)	W, 7-3
Tues.	9	at North Florida	W, 6-1
Wed.	12	at Jacksonville	L, 6-9 (10)
Thur.	13	vs. E. Illinois (@UNF)	W, 3-2
Fri.	14	vs. Navy (@UNF)	W, 11-2
Sat.	15	vs. Creighton (@JU)	W, 10-3
Sat.	22	at Villanova (DH)	Noon
Sun.	23	at Villanova	Noon
Tues.	25	TOLEDO	5:05
Wed.	26	PURDUE	5:05
Sat.	29	GEORGETOWN (DH)	12:05
Sun.	30	GEORGETOWN	12:05

### APRIL

Tues.	1	DETROIT	5:05
Wed.	2	VALPARAISO	5:05
Fri.	4	at Boston College (DH)	Noon
Sun.	6	at St. John's (DH)	Noon
Tues.	8	BOWLING GREEN	5:05
Wed.	9	WESTERN MICHIGAN	5:05
Thur.	10	CHICAGO STATE	5:05
Sat.	12	+ vs. Creighton	4:00
Sun.	13	at Creighton	Noon
Tues.	15	EASTERN MICHIGAN	5:05
Thur.	17	PITTSBURGH (DH)	12:05
Sat.	19	SETON HALL (DH)	11:05
Tues.	22	BALL STATE	6:05
Wed.	23	CLEVELAND STATE	5:05
Sat.	26	CONNECTICUT (DH)	12:05
Sun.	27	CONNECTICUT	12:05
Tues.	29	vs. Michigan	7:30
Wed.	30	OAKLAND (MI)	6:05

### MAY

Sat.	3	WEST VIRGINIA (DH)	12:05
Sun.	4	WEST VIRGINIA	12:05
Sat.	10	at Rutgers (DH)	Noon
Sun.	11	at Rutgers	Noon
Tues.	13	CINCINNATI	3:05
Wed.	14	BUTLER	6:05
Fri.	16	at Virginia Tech (DH)	Noon
Sat.	17	at Virginia Tech	Noon

### BIG EAST Tournament (Bridgewater, NJ)

Thur.-	22-	Commerce Bank Ballpark
Sat.	24	

### JUNE

#### NCAA Regionals (campus sites)

Fri.-	30-
Sun.	1

#### NCAA Super-Regionals (campus sites)

Fri.-	6
Sun.	8

#### College World Series (Omaha, NE)

Fri.-	13-	Rosenblatt Stadium
Mon.	23	

All listings indicate local starting times

Home games (bold caps) at Frank Eck Stadium

§ – Dairy Queen Classic (Metrodome; Minneapolis)

★ – Kennel Club Classic (Jacksonville, FL)

+ – Rosenblatt Stadium (Omaha, NE)

• – BIG EAST Conference game

◆ – Fifth/Third Bank Ballpark (Grand Rapids, MI)

## MATCHUP & SERIES NOTES

**BIG EAST PLAY BEGINS** – Boston College opened BIG EAST play last week by taking 2-of-3 from Georgetown while this weekend's action already has included UConn's 6-2 win over the Hoyas and a narrow win by Pittsburgh over Seton Hall (2-1).

**PROBABLE PITCHING MATCHUPS** – Notre Dame is slated to start (in order) sophomore RHPs **Chris Niesel** (3.46, 1-0, 26 IP, 21 Ks/5 BB, 13 H) and **John Axford** (2.62, 3-0, 24 IP, 20 Ks/7 BB, 23 H) followed by senior RHP **Ryan Kalita** (1-0, 4.50, 14 IP, 9 Ks/10 BB, 13 H) ... Villanova is expected to counter with senior RHP **Tom Kandybowicz** (7.53, 1-1, 14.1 IP, 12 Ks/4 BB, 23 H), sophomore RHP **Nick Allen** (4.58, 2-1, 17.2 IP, 15 Ks/4 BB, 25 H) and senior RHP **John Yeager** (2.00, 1-1, 9 IP, 9 Ks/3 BB, 10 H).

**THE SERIES** – Notre Dame holds a **15-4** series edge vs. Villanova, with all of the games coming since the Irish joined the BIG EAST in 1995-96 ... ND was 6-2 vs. VU in three series played at Richie Ashburn Field in downtown Philadelphia ('99, '00, '02) ... the Irish beat the Wildcats in a 1996 BIG EAST Tournament elimination game (7-3) but VU posted a pair of tournament wins over Notre Dame in '97 (10-5, 5-4).

### RECAPPING THE 2002 SERIES

• **VU 8, ND 7** – The Irish jumped out to a 3-0 cushion and held two other leads but VU had the final answer – tying the game with **Rob Cafeiro's** two-run homer in the 7th before surging ahead in the 8th of a single Saturday game... **Grant Johnson** left the game with a 6-5 lead and two outs in the 6th (7 H, 2 BB, 3 Ks) while **J.P. Gagne** (2.1IP, 3 R, 4 H, BB) suffered the loss ... VU closer **James Russell** (4 BF) picked up the win, after ace **Brian Slocum** recovered from a three-run 1st (5.1 IP, 5 R, 6 H, 3 BB, 4 Ks) ... singles from **Greg Fatter**, **Brian Trotta** and **Brendan Trainor** led to the winning run ... Kris Billmaier's squeeze bunt gave ND a 7-5 lead in the 7th.

• **ND 8, VU 1** – **Paul O'Toole** put the Irish on the board in the 1st, launching a two-run shot over the CF fence, with **Joe Thaman's** solo shot then producing a 3-0 lead ... **John Axford** (6.2 IP, R, 3 H, 7 BB, K) picked up the win while **Chris Niesel** notched the save (2.1 IP, BB, 4 Ks, 8 BF) ... **Bob Grzenda** took the loss (6 IP, 7 R, 8 H).

• **ND 9, VU 5** – The Irish erased a 2-0 deficit, with three more home runs accounting for the first five ND runs ... **Thaman's** second HR of the doubleheader forged a 2-2 tie in the 3rd inning and **Steve Sollmann** followed moments later with his first home run of the season (a solo shot to center) ... **Brian Stavisky's** two-run shot pushed the lead to 5-2 lead in the 5th ... Sollmann hit 4-for-8 in the doubleheader, with doubles in each game and a triple in the finale (Thaman hit 4-for-5 in the two games) ... **Peter Ogilvie** (6.2 IP, 4 R, 3 H, 3 BB, 6 Ks) picked up the win while **Gagne** (2.1 IP, 3 H, 2 BB, 4 Ks) closed the game ... **Tom Kandybowicz** took the loss (4.1 IP, 5 R, 6 H, 2 BB, 3 Ks).

**SCOUTING THE WILDCATS** – Villanova (4-8) returns 23 of 32 letterwinners from its 2002 team that went 30-23 and finished 8th in the BIG EAST (12-13) ... the Wildcats own wins over Hofstra, Maryland-Eastern Shore (2-1 series) and St. Joseph's, with other losses to UNLV (3), Dartmouth, NC State (2) and UNC-Wilmington ... VU's top returners include a pair of 2002 second team all-BIG EAST performers: CF **Chris Graziano** (6th in nation with 38 SBs in '02) and righthanded closer **James Russell** (3rd nationally with 15 saves in '02) ... Graziano was rated by *Baseball America* as the BIG EAST's best and fastest baserunner (also top defensive OF) while Russell has received preseason All-America honors ... VU must replace a pair of key power hitters in 2nd-team all-BIG EAST picks Rob Cafeiro and Brennan Mannix, plus ace RHP Brian Slocum (who signed as a Cleveland Indians 2nd-rounder, after his junior season) ... freshman 1B **Freddie Thon** was rated by *BA* as the BIG EAST's top newcomer for 2003.

### CAREER STATS VS. VILLANOVA

**Steve Sollmann:** .458 (11-for-28), 13 RBI, 8 R, HR, 2 2B, BB, 2 Ks, 0-1 SB

**Joe Thaman:** .353 (6-for-17), 5 RBI, 5 R, 2 HR, 2B, 3 BB, K, 2-2 SB

**Javi Sanchez:** .273 (3-for-11), 4 R, BB, K

**Kris Billmaier:** .174 (4-for-23), 2 RBI, 5 R, HR, 3 BB, 3 Ks

**Chris Niesel:** 1 GP, SV, 2.1 IP, 4 Ks, BB

**John Axford:** 1 GS, 1-0, 4.2 IP, R, 3 H, 7 BB, K, WP

**Ryan Kalita:** 1 GP, 2.0 IP, 3 R/2 ER, 4 H, 2 BB, 2 Ks, WP

**J.P. Gagne:** 4 GP/1 GS, 2.64, 2-1, 13.2 IP, 6 R/4 ER, 17 H, 5 BB, 9 Ks

**Matt Laird:** 2 GP/1 GS, 2.0 IP, 3 E/1 ER, 3 H, 2 BB, 2 Ks

**Brandon Vilorio:** 1 GP, R, 2 H, BB

## SERIES NOTES

### VILLANOVA CAREER STATS VS. NOTRE DAME

**Tom Kandybowicz:** 3 GS (1-2), 6.60, 15 IP, 13 R/11 ER, 19 H, 8 BB, 7 Ks, 2 WP, 2 BK  
**vs. Kandybowicz**

Sollmann: 2-for-6, 2 RBI, HR, 2B (F8, 2B-MI/RBI, F9; KS, HR-8, 5-3)  
 Billmaier: 1-for-6, R, BB, K (1B-RS/pickoff, E5T/R; F9, KS, BB; P6, 5-3)  
 Sanchez: 2-for-2 (1B-MI, 1B-9)  
 Thaman: 1-for-4, 2 RBI, HR, K (4-1, P6; HR-LC/2RBI, KS)

**Nick Allen:** 2 IP, R, H (Billmaier 163 BU, Sanchez 3U, Thaman 1B-RS/SB/6U, Sollmann 2B-LL/RBI)

**John Yeager:** 5.2 IP, 8 R/4ER, 10 H, 4 BB, K, E  
**vs. Yeager**

Sollmann: 2-for-4, 2 RBI, HR, 2B (P3, 2B-RL/RBI, 5-3, 1B-LS/RBI/R)  
 Billmaier: 0-for-3, BB, R, K (KS, BB/R, L9, F7)  
 Thaman: 1-for-4, RBI (FF5, 1b-MI/RBI, 463 DP)

**Adrian Schau:** 3 GP, 9.00, 3 IP, 4 R/3 ER, 5 H, 4 BB, K, WP, HB  
**vs. Schau**

Thaman: 4-3, BB ... Sollmann: HR-9/2 RBI, HBP ... Billmaier 1-3 SAC/RBI ... Sanchez: P1

**Dan Farino:** 2 GP, 9.00, 2 IP, 2 R, 2 H (Thaman F7; Sollmann 4-3/RBI)

**Mike Ciccotelli:** IP, 2 R, 3 H (Billmaier HR-LC; Thaman 3U/RBI)

**James Baxter:** IP, R, H, WP (Sollmann 2B-RC/R)

**James Russell:** 3 GP, 4.50, 1-0, 4 IP, 2 R, 2 H, BB, 4 Ks  
**vs. Russell**

Sollmann: 1-for-2 (F9, 3B-RC/2 RBI/R) ... Billmaier: 0-for-2 (FF2, L5) ... Thaman: BB/R

**Marshall Canosa:** 1-for-5 (.200), E

**Mark Cardillo:** 0-for-2

**Greg Fater:** 2-for-8 (.250), 3 R, SAC, BB, 3 Ks

**Chris Graziano:** 2-for-11 (.182), RBI, 3 R, 2 BB, 2-2 SB, SAC, 2 Ks

**Brian Newbold:** 5-for-16 (.313), 2R, 2 2B, BB, 2 Ks

**Adrian Schau:** 2-for-15 (.133), 4 RBI, R, HR, 2 BB, SB, SAC, 2 Ks, E

**Brian Trotta:** 5-for-18 (.278), 2 RBI, R, 2 2B, 2 BB, 0-2 SB, 2 Ks, SAC, E

**vs. Chris Niesel**

Graziano: F7 ... Schau: 6-3 ... Newbold: KL ... Fater: KS ... Trotta: KL

**vs. John Axford**

Graziano: 1-for-2 (1B-MI, F8) ... Schau: 0-for-1, BB (F9, BB) ... Newbold: 1-for-1, BB (1B-3/3U, BB)  
 Fater: 0-for-2 (F9, 4-3) ... Trotta: 1-for-2(1B-MI, F8)

**vs. Ryan Kalita (2001)**

Ryan Crammer: 0-for-1 (4-3) ... Fater: 0-for-1 (KL) ... Newbold: BB

**vs. J.P. Gagne (3-for-15)**

Newbold: 1-for-6 (6-3, 5-3, F7; L3; 1B-7, P3) ... Trotta: 2-for-5, R, K (E4F/R, KL, 4-3; 1B-LL; 2B-LL)  
 Schau: 1-for-5, HR, BB (6-3, P5, HR-7; KS; 5-3, BB) ... Graziano: 0-for-3 (4-3, 4-3; 4-1 ...  
 Fater: 1-for-2, K (1B-9/R; KS)

**vs. Brandon Vilorio**

Graziano: 1B-LS

**BIG EAST STAT LEADERS** – Notre Dame heads into league play ranked 5th among BIG EAST teams in batting (.301), 4th in ERA (4.70) and 1st in fielding (.969) while Villanova is 8th in batting (.267), 10th in ERA (7.96) and 5th in fielding (.955) ... ND junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** ranks 1st among BIG EAST players in 3Bs (2), 2nd in hits (24), runs (15) and SBs (9), 4th in total bases (33), 5th in on-base (.492) and slugging (.589) and 6th in batting (.429) ... ND senior RF **Kris Billmaier** is 1st in TBs (38), 2nd in RBI (15), 3rd in HRs (3) and slugging (.623), 4th in 2Bs (5), 7th in hits (22) and 8th in runs (12) while sophomore 3B/1B **Matt Edwards** is 5th in RBI (13) and 10th in 2Bs (4) ... Irish sophomore RHPs **Chris Niesel** (2nd with .198 opp. batting, 3rd with 26 IP, 5th with 21 Ks) and **John Axford** (2nd with 3 wins, 7th with 2.62 ERA and 20 Ks and 8th with 24 IP) joins senior RHP **J.P. Gagne** (2nd with 3 saves, 5th with 7 GP) among the BIG EAST stat leaders ... VU's **Chris Graziano** leads all BIG EAST players with 9 SBs while **Danny Poydenis** is 9th in on-base pct. (.465) and 7th in slugging pct. (.579).

## National Polls (March 17)

### BASEBALL AMERICA TOP 25

Team	W-L	Final '02
1. Rice	19-1	(5)
2. Georgia Tech	17-1	(8)
3. Arizona State	30-2	(22)
4. Florida State	24-2	(7)
5. Long Beach State	16-6	(21)
6. Cal State Fullerton	18-4	(-)
7. Stanford	14-7	(4)
8. Baylor	17-6	(-)
9. Texas	18-7	(1)
10. Richmond	13-2	(16)
11. Auburn	18-5	(-)
12. Mississippi State	13-2	(-)
13. Wake Forest	13-5	(12)
14. South Carolina	15-5	(2)
15. Nebraska	11-4	(9)
16. LSU	13-7	(11)
17. Clemson	11-3	(3)
18. Miami	15-4	(-)
<b>19. NOTRE DAME</b>	<b>9-5</b>	<b>(6)</b>
20. Texas A&M	19-5	(-)
21. Alabama	16-3	(-)
22. Arkansas	18-6	(-)
23. Kansas	18-6	(-)
24. Florida Atlantic	19-6	(-)
25. Tulane	15-6	(-)

### COLLEGIATE BASEBALL TOP 30

Team	W-L	Pts (Final '02)
1. Arizona State	30-2	494 (26)
2. Florida State	24-2	493 (2)
3. Georgia Tech	17-1	492 (4)
4. Rice	19-1	491 (7)
5. Cal State Fullerton	18-4	487 (3)
6. Long Beach State	16-6	484 (27)
7. Stanford	14-7	482 (4)
8. Baylor	17-6	479 (-)
9. Mississippi State	13-2-1	472 (-)
10. Texas	18-7	470 (1)
11. South Carolina	15-5	467 (2)
12. Richmond	13-2	464 (13)
13. Miami	15-4	460 (17)
14. Clemson	11-3	455 (3)
15. LSU	13-7-1	450 (11)
16. Wake Forest	13-5	449 (14)
17. Auburn	18-5	447 (-)
18. Alabama	16-3	446 (-)
19. Kansas	18-6	443 (-)
20. Arizona	17-7	440 (-)
21. Texas A&M	19-5	439 (-)
22. Florida	15-5-1	437 (-)
23. Arkansas	16-2	433 (-)
24. Nebraska	11-4	430 (8)
25. N.C. State	18-4	428 (-)
<b>26. NOTRE DAME</b>	<b>9-5</b>	<b>427 (6)</b>
27. Ala.-Birmingham	17-3	424 (-)
28. Coastal Carolina	18-4	420 (-)
29. Wichita State	13-5	419 (22)
30. Oklahoma	11-5	408 (-)

### USA TODAY/ESPN COACHES POLL

Team (1st)	W-L	Pts (Final '02)
1. Arizona State (21)	30-2	995 (19)
2. Florida State (16)	24-2	987 (9)
3. Georgia Tech (1)	17-1	918 (5)
4. Rice (3)	19-1	913 (6)
5. Cal State Fullerton	18-4	815 (-)
6. Stanford	14-7	768 (4)
7. Long Beach State	16-6	760 (-)
8. Texas	18-7	712 (1)
9. Baylor	17-6	708 (-)
10. South Carolina	15-5	569 (2)
11. Auburn	18-5	567 (-)
12. Mississippi State	13-2-1	531 (-)
13. Richmond	13-2	422 (16)
14. Alabama	16-3	419 (-)
15. Miami	15-4	399 (20)
16. Clemson	11-3	383 (3)
17. Wake Forest	13-5	366 (13)
18. Nebraska	11-4	343 (8)
19. Texas A&M	19-5	292 (-)
20. Arkansas	16-2	216 (-0)
21. Florida	15-5-1	207 (-)
22. LSU	13-7-1	183 (-)
23. Texas Tech	17-8	156 (-)
24. Kansas	18-6	125 (-)
<b>25. NOTRE DAME</b>	<b>9-5</b>	<b>81 (7)</b>

**Others receiving votes:** Wichita State (55), Coastal Carolina (50), USC (50), Arizona (49), NC State (45), Oklahoma (40), Tulane (35), UNC Greensboro (31), Southern Mississippi (30), Florida Atlantic (14), Ohio State (11), SW Missouri (11), Loyola Marymount (10), Washington (10), Houston (10), Minnesota (9), Oklahoma State (8), Florida International (5), McNeese State (3), UNLV (3), Tennessee (3), Illinois (2), East Carolina (2), UNC Wilmington (1).

*Italics – 2003 Notre Dame opponents*

### #3 Steve Sollmann (Jr., 2B; Cincinnati, OH)

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'01	61/61	80-221	52	5-2-9	36	30/29	23-34	.489	.440	.362
'02	59/57	77-213	53	2-4-8	47	22/18	6-6	.465	.420	.362
'03	14/14	24-56	15	1-2-2	8	7/3	9-11	.589	.492	.429
<b>Car.</b>	<b>134/132</b>	<b>181-490</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>8-8-19</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>59/50</b>	<b>38-51</b>	<b>.490</b>	<b>.437</b>	<b>.369</b>

#### 2003 Team Ranks

1st – batting avg. (.429), R (15), hits (24), sac. bunts (3), 3Bs (2), BBs (7), on-base pct. (.492), SBs (9), leadoff OB (.714), bases-loaded bat. (1.000)  
 2nd – total bases (33), slugging pct. (.589), runner advanced pct. (.625)  
 3rd – RBI (8), batting with RBI opp.'s (.429), batting with runners (.350)  
 • Also ranked 1st among BIG EAST players in 3Bs, 2nd in H, R, SB, 4th in TBs, 5th in OB and slugging and 6th in batting

#### Career Stats vs. Villanova

.458 (11-for-28), 13 RBI, 8 R, HR, 2 2B, BB, 2 Ks, 0-1 SB

#### Top Games in 2003

- vs. Dayton (2/21, 10-9) – 3-for-5, 3 R, 3B, SB
- vs. Newman (2/22, 15-5) – 3-for-4, RBI, 2 R
- vs. Vanderbilt (3/8, 3-1) – 2-for-4, 2 R, BB, scored winning run in 11th
- at North Florida (3/11, 6-1) – 3-for-4, R, SB, SAC
- vs. E. Illinois (3/13, 3-2) – 2-for-2, 3-run inside-park HR, 2 BB
- vs. Creighton (3/15, 10-3) – 3-for-5, RBI, 2 R, SB

#### Notes

- Ranks 5th in ND history for career batting avg. (.369), 8th in SBs (38).
- Shifted to **leadoff spot** at Kennel Club Classic, after batting in No. 2 hole for most of his career.
- Takes a **five-game hitting streak** into the Villanova series, with hits in 11 of 14 games overall **nine multi-hit games** in '03 (four three-hit games).
- Named **BIG EAST player of the week** for Spring Break trip, after matching teammate Kris Billmaier with team-leading totals during six-game week in batting avg. (.478), hits (**11-for-23**), total bases (17) and slugging (.739), plus six RBI (matching Billmaier) seven runs and three walks (both one more than Billmaier), a home run, triple and double, two sacrifice bunts, four stolen bases, just one strikeout and no errors in 28 fielding chances .. also named BEPOY after batting **8-for-7** to open season.
- Has **struck out just three** times all season while making only **one error**.
- His hit to the right-center gap and scamper around the bases vs. EIU marked the first inside-the-park home run for an ND player since one of the most memorable offensive efforts in the program's history, when Alec Porzel went 6-for-6 and hit for the cycle vs. Pittsburgh on May 7, 2000, at Eck Stadium (Porzel hit traditional and inside-the-park HRs in that game).

### #13 Brennan Grogan (Fr., CF; Temecula, FL)

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'03	12/10	10-37	8	0-1-0	5	1/6	3-3	.324	.308	.270

#### 2003 Team Ranks

1st – two-out batting average (.444)  
 3rd – stolen bases (3)      5th – runs (8)

#### Top Games

- vs. Dayton (2/21, 10-9) – 2-for-3, 2 RBI, R, SAC
- vs. Vanderbilt (3/8, 3-1) – 2-for-5, RBI, R, game-ending 3B in 11th
- vs. Creighton (3/15, 10-3) – 1-for-4, RBI, 3 R, BB, SB

#### Notes

- Enters Villanova series riding **five-game hitting streak**
- Has made **seven starts in CF**, three in LF
- Moved into **No. 2 spot** in lineup at Kennel Club Classic, earlier batting 8th (2) and 9th (1)

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

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'02	9/8	9-31	3	0-0-1	4	3/6	1-1	.323	.371	.290
'03	13/13	20-51	9	1-0-4	13	3/7	0-2	.529	.448	.392
<b>Car.</b>	<b>22/21</b>	<b>29-82</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1-0-5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6/13</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>.451</b>	<b>.419</b>	<b>.354</b>

#### 2003 Team Ranks

1st – 2-out RBI (6), batting average with RBI opp.'s (.588), batting avg. with runners (.667), runners advanced pct. (.667)  
 2nd – batting (.392), RBI (13), 2Bs (4), on-base (.448), hit-by-pitch (3)  
 3rd – runs (9), total bases (27), slugging pct. (.529), hits (20)  
 4th – leadoff on-base pct. (.462)  
 • Also ranked 1st among BIG EAST players in TBs, 2nd in RBI, 3rd in HRs and slugging, 4th in 2Bs, 7th in hits and 8th in runs.

#### Top 2003 Games

- vs. Dayton (2/21, 10-9) – 3-for-4, R, 2B
- vs. Wake Forest (3/2, 2-1) – 3-for-4
- at North Florida (3/11, 6-1) – 2-for-5, 2-run HR
- vs. Navy (3/14, 11-2) – 3-for-4, 2 RBI, 2 R, 2B, HBP
- vs. Creighton (4/15, 10-3) – 3-for-4, 3 RBI, R, 2 2B, HBP

#### Notes

- Shifted to **first base** for final two games at Kennel Club Classic
- His **five multi-hit games** include four with three hits
- Hit **cleanup** at Kennel Club Classic (7 gms), after batting 3-hole in 7 gms
- Has returned from early-season **broken leg** in 2002 (9 GP)
- **Spring Break** stats: 11-for-28/.393, HR, 3 2B, 9 RBI, BB, 3 HBP, 5 R

### #8 Kris Billmaier (Sr., RF; Woodinville, WA)

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'00	33/21	29-82	18	4-0-3	19	8/10	0-2	.537	.413	.354
'01	56/55	47-183	34	3-0-9	37	30/15	4-6	.355	.382	.257
'02	65/62	72-230	34	3-1-8	41	14/33	2-2	.396	.369	.313
'03	14/14	22-61	12	3-1-5	15	2/6	0-0	.623	.379	.361
<b>Car.</b>	<b>168/152</b>	<b>170-556</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>13-2-25</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>54/64</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>.428</b>	<b>.381</b>	<b>.306</b>

#### 2003 Team Ranks

1st – RBI (15), home runs (3), doubles (5), total bases (38), slugging (.623), runners advanced (9)  
 2nd – runs (12), hits (22), bases-loaded batting (.500), leadoff OB (.700)  
 3rd – batting average (.361), runners advanced pct. (.622)  
 4th – batting with RBI opp.'s (.318), batting with runners (.324)  
 • Also ranked 5th among BIG EAST players in RBI, 10th in 2Bs

#### Career Stats vs. Villanova

.174 (4-for-23), 2 RBI, 5 R, HR, 3 BB, 3 Ks

#### Top 2003 Games

- vs. Dayton (2/21, 10-9) – 2-for-5, 2 RBI, 2 R, HR
- vs. Newman (2/22, 15-5) – 3-for-4, 6 RBI, 2 R, 2 HR
- at Arizona State (2/23, 8-14) – 2-for-5, RBI, R, 2B
- vs. Nebraska (2/28, 1-7) – 2-for-4
- vs. Navy (3/10, 7-3) – 3-for-3, 2 R, 2B, HBP
- vs. Navy (3/14, 11-2) – 3-for-5, 3 RBI, 2 R, 3B
- vs. Creighton (3/15, 10-3) – 2-for-2, 2 RBI, R, 2B, 2 BB, SF

#### Notes

- Opened season hitting in 3-hole (7 games) before switching to cleanup
- Hit all of his **home runs in first two games**
- Has seen his **slugging** pct. (.623) jump 227 points from 2002 (.396)
- **Spring Break** stats: 11-for-28/.393, 6 RBI, 3B, 4 2B, 2 BB, HBP

**NEW NAMES IN CENTER** – Three ND freshmen – **Craig Cooper, Cody Rizzo** and **Brennan Grogan** – all had made starts in centerfield, just eight games into the season ... by contrast, 2002 graduate Steve Stanley made all 256 starts in CF during the 1999-2000 seasons ... the previous player (other than Stanley) to start in center field for the Irish was switch-hitter and leadoff batter Allen Greene (in '98) ... other recent CFs include Randall Brooks ('97), Scott Sollmann ('94-'96), Eric Danapilis ('90, '93), Dan Bautch ('91-'92) and Dan Peltier ('87-'89) – with Peltier (.406), Danapilis (.405), Stanley (.384) and Scott Sollmann (.372) ranking atop the ND career batting list (while dominating several other categories) ... the only players other than Stanley who patrolled CF for the Irish during '99-'02 included catcher Paul O'Toole (2 innings), utility player Ben Cooke (5), LHP Mike Naumann (1) and walk-ons John Heintz (5) and George Howard (11).

### **#15 Javi Sanchez** (Jr., C; Miami, FL)

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'01	9/2	0-13	0	0-0-0	0	1/2	0-0	.000	.071	.000
'02	66/65	65-231	50	5-3-7	29	24/32	1-1	.403	.360	.281
'03	13/13	18-54	6	1-0-3	7	4/6	1-1	.444	.383	.333
<b>Car.</b>	<b>88/80</b>	<b>83-298</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>6-3-10</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>29/40</b>	<b>2-2</b>	<b>.393</b>	<b>.352</b>	<b>.279</b>

#### **2003 Team Ranks**

- 2nd – walks (4)
- 4th – batting avg. (.333), hits (18), total bases (24), RBI (7)
- 5th – batting with RBI opp.'s (.278), batting with runners (.321)

#### **Career Stats vs. Villanova**

.273 (3-for-11), 4 R, BB, K

#### **Top 2003 Games**

- at Arizona State (2/23, 8-14) – 2-for-5, 2 RBI, R, 2B
- vs. Minnesota (3/1, 2-8) – 2-for-4, R
- vs. Navy (3/10, 7-3) – 2-for-4, RBI, R
- at North Florida (3/9, 6-1) – 2-for-2, 2B, 2 BB
- at Jacksonville (3/12, 6-9) – 2-for-4, 2 RBI, 2 R, game-tying HR, BB, SB
- vs. Eastern Illinois (3/13, 3-2) – 2-for-4, 2B
- vs. Navy (3/14, 11-2) – 2-for-4, RBI, R, SF

#### **Notes**

- Named **all-tournament** at Dairy Queen Classic
- Has posted **seven 2-hit games** in last 12
- **Prep 2B** who has tackled new positions in 2002 (SS) and '03 (C)

### **#5 Matt Macri** (So., SS; Clive, IA)

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'02	17/16	14-68	10	1-0-3	13	7/24	1-2	.294	.273	.206
'03	13/13	10-50	8	1-0-4	7	4/2	1-1	.340	.286	.200
<b>Car.</b>	<b>30/29</b>	<b>24-118</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2-0-7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11/32</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>.314</b>	<b>.278</b>	<b>.203</b>

#### **2003 Team Ranks**

- 2nd – doubles (4), sac. bunts (2), walks (4)
- 4th – RBI (7), 2-out RBI (4)
- 5th – runs (8)

#### **Top Games and Notes**

- at Arizona State (2/23, 8-14) – 2-for-5, 2 RBI, R, HR
- vs. Navy (3/10, 7-3) – 1-for-4, 2 RBI, R, 2B
- vs. Navy (3/14, 11-2) – 2-for-5, 2 R, 2B
- Opened batting leadoff (5), then 3rd (1), 5th (4), 6th (2) and 7th (1)
- Nation's **No. 40 prospect** (2nd SS) for 2003 draft (*Baseball America*)
- Did not play vs. Eastern Illinois

### **Cody Rizzo** (Fr., DH/OF; Temecula, CA)

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'03	10/9	11-36	5	1-0-3	6	0/11	0-0	.472	.390	.306

#### **2003 Team Ranks**

- 1st – hit-by-pitch (5)
- 2nd – batting with RBI opp.'s (.444), batting with runners (.429)
- 4th – doubles (3), on-base pct. (.390), advanced runners pct. (.600)
- 5th – batting avg. (.306), slugging (.472), hits (11), leadoff on-base (.429)

#### **Top Games**

- vs. Newman (2/22, 15-5) – 2-for-3, 3 RBI, R, 2B, 2 HBP
- at Arizona State (2/23, 8-14) – 2-for-4, 2 RBI, 2 R, HR
- vs. Navy (3/14, 11-2) – 2-for-5, RBI, 2B
- vs. Creighton (3/15, 10-3) – 2-for-3, R, 2B, HBP

#### **Notes**

- Has filled DH role (2 starts), also making starts at CF (4) and LF (3)
- Hit leadoff at DQ Classic (2), also batting 6th (2), 7th (3) and 8th (2)

### **#9 Craig Cooper** (Fr., OF; Plainview, NY)

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'03	14/10	11-43	5	0-0-3	6	3/9	4-6	.326	.304	.256

#### **2003 Team Ranks**

- 2nd – stolen bases (4), two-out RBI (4)
- 4th – doubles (3)

#### **Top Games**

- vs. Dayton (2/21, 10-9) – 2-for-4, 2 RBI, SB
- vs. Navy (3/10, 7-3) – 2-for-4, RBI, R, SB
- vs. Navy (3/14, 11-2) – 2-for-4, 2 RBI, R, 2B

#### **Notes**

- Has made starts at LF (6), CF (3) and DH (1)
- Has made 7 starts in 9-hole (2 in 7th, 1 in 8th)

**BIG DEBUT** – Notre Dame's seven freshman position players combined to hit .389 (21-for-54) in the opening week of the 2003 season while the offense enjoyed one its most productive opening weeks in recent memory (.367 batting, 36 runs; compared to .273, 22 R in first four games of '02) ... the freshmen have combined to make 47 starts, with 51 hits in 194 at-bats (.263 combined batting average), 24 RBI, 33 runs, 11 extra-base hits (2 HR, 2 3B, 7 2B), seven walks, 43 Ks and seven stolen bases.

### **#4 Greg Lopez** (Fr., IF; Upper Arlington, OH)

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'03	11/7	8-30	5	0-0-0	4	0/4	0-1	.267	.281	.267

#### **2003 Team Ranks**

- 2nd – runners advanced (6)
- 3rd – leadoff on-base pct. (.500)

#### **Top Games**

- vs. Newman (2/22, 15-5) – 2-for-4, RBI, R
- at Jacksonville (3/12, 6-9) – 3-for-5, RBI, 2 R
- vs. Eastern Illinois (3/13, 3-2) – 2-for-3, R

#### **Notes**

- Valuable utility infielder, making starts at SS (2) and 3B (5)
- Has hit in 8th (3) and 9th (4) spots

### **#21 Joe Thaman** (Jr., 1B; St. Louis, MO)

Yr.	GP/GS	H-AB	R	HR-3B-2B	RBI	BB/K	SB	SLUG	OB	AVG
'01	61/60	59-208	29	2-1-15	25	10/31	1-3	.394	.318	.284
'02	62/58	49-180	43	6-0-6	33	24/40	2-5	.406	.370	.272
'03	14/11	9-44	3	0-0-3	7	2/16	0-0	.273	.239	.205
<b>Car.</b>	<b>137/129</b>	<b>117-432</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>8-1-24</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>36/87</b>	<b>3-8</b>	<b>.387</b>	<b>.333</b>	<b>.271</b>

#### **2003 Team Ranks**

- 2nd – 2-out RBI (5)
- 4th – runners advanced (5)

#### **Career Stats vs. Villanova**

.353 (6-for-17), 5 RBI, 5 R, 2 HR, 2B, 3 BB, K, 2-2 SB

#### **Top 2003 Games**

- vs. Dayton (2/21, 10-9) – 2-for-5, 2 RBI
- vs. Newman (2/22, 15-5) – 2-for-5, 2 R, 2B
- vs. Wake Forest (3/2, 2-1) – Gamewinning hit in 13th (1B up middle)
- vs. Navy (3/10, 7-3) – 1-for-4, 2 RBI, 2B

**POWER SURGE** – Joe Thaman hit only two home runs as a freshman ('01) and had totaled just four career HRs in his first 230 career ABs before launching his first of two HRs in the 2002 Mother's Day doubleheader vs. Villanova (in Philadelphia) ... he blasted a pair of grand slams the next week, in consecutive games vs. BC, for 4 HR in 14 ABs.

## Game 1 Starter – Chris Niesel

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'02	14/11	72.1	68 (.241, 7)	33/27	62/18	2/4	4-0 (2)	3.36
'03	4/4	26.0	20 (.198, 1)	13/10	21/5	3/2	1-1 (0)	3.46
<b>Car.</b>	<b>18/15</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>88 (.230, 8)</b>	<b>46/37</b>	<b>83/23</b>	<b>5/6</b>	<b>5-1 (2)</b>	<b>3.39</b>

### Niesel's 2003 Game-By-Game

Opponent	IP	H (HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
Dayton	6.0	6	4/4	1/2	1/0	–	6.00
Nebraska	4.0	9 (1)	6/6	2/1	0/0	L	9.00
Vanderbilt	8.0	3	1/0	9/0	1/2	–	5.00
E. Illinois	8.0	2	2/0	9/2	1/0	W	3.46

### Situational Pitching ('03)

- .407 opp. leadoff on-base pct. (11 of 27)
- .205 opp. batting with runners on base (9-for-44)
- .129 opp. batting with two outs (4-for-31)

### Nine-Inning Averages ('03)

- 6.9 hits, 1.7 walks, 7.3 strikeouts, 11.4 groundouts, 37.7 batters faced
- 6.2 innings per start
- 4.2 K-to-walk ratio (would rank 9th in ND history)

### Career Stats Vs. Villanova ('03)

1 GP, SV, 2.1 IP, 4 Ks, BB

**PITCHER OF THE WEEK** – Chris Niesel was named BIG EAST pitcher of the week for his strong outing in the 3-2 win over Eastern Illinois (8 IP, 2 UER, 2 H, 2 BB, 9 Ks, 8 groundball outs, 6 balls out of infield, 75 of 105 pitches for strikes ... he ranks 2nd among BIG EAST players in low opponent batting avg. (.198), 3rd in IP (26) and 5th in Ks (21).

**JUST WIN, BABY** – Niesel headed into 2003 with an impressive streak of winning decisions that began with the start of his senior season at Aquinas High School (13-0) and continued with the Irish in 2002 (4-0, in addition to leaving several other games in line for wins) – followed by a 3-1 record with the Falmouth Commodores in the Cape Cod League during the summer of '02 ... Niesel also opened ND's annual Blue-Gold intrasquad series with impressive wins (in the fall of '01, and again in the fall of '02), yielding a mark of 22-1 in 23 decisions (before last week's loss to Nebraska) ... he now is 23-2 in his last 25 decisions.

**DANDY DEBUT** – Niesel in 2002 became the first Notre Dame freshman ever to post double-digit strikeouts in his debut, vs. Southern Illinois at the 2002 New Orleans Classic (Feb. 24) ... Niesel left that game with a 2-1 lead (ND lost 6-2) while racking up 10 Ks in five innings (5 H, 0 BB) ... he then posted nine Ks and one walk the next week vs. Fairfield (in Homestead, Fla.), yielding 19 Ks and just one walk in his first 12 innings ... Niesel posted a pair of 9-K games at last week's Kennel Club Classic (vs. Vanderbilt and Eastern Illinois).

**BACK IN STEREO** – Niesel – who tossed the clinching win at Florida State in the 2002 NCAA Super-Regional series – missed five weeks in '02 due to a bout with mononucleosis (April 8-May 11) before three solid relief efforts, strong starts in the BIG EAST Tournament vs. Virginia Tech (his first start in seven weeks) and another solid start vs. Ohio State in the South Bend Regional (he was the winner in the 9-6 clincher; 6 IP, 2 H, 2 R, 2 BB, 4 Ks, 94 pitches) ... he then added the clinching 3-1 win at FSU (8 IP, 6 H, 3 BB, 5 Ks) and had a strong outing vs. Rice in the CWS (6.2 IP, 5 H, 2 R, 2 BB, 7 Ks; with ND rallying for a 5-3 win in the 9th) ... his 2002 postseason stats included a 2.05 ERA in five outings (four starts, 22 Ks, 7 BB, 23 H in 26.1 IP).

## Game 2 Starter – John Axford

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'02	17/12	70.2	59 (.231, 1)	45/31	64/59	7/6	5-2 (0)	3.95
'03	4/4	24.0	23 (.258, 1)	8/7	20/7	5/1	3-0 (0)	2.62
<b>Car.</b>	<b>21/16</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>82 (.238, 2)</b>	<b>53/38</b>	<b>84/66</b>	<b>12/7</b>	<b>8-2 (0)</b>	<b>3.61</b>

### Axford's 2003 Game-By-Game

Opponent	IP	H (HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
Newman	6.0	8	2/2	1/2	1/0	W	3.00
Wake Forest	7.0	4	1/1	1/2	0/0	–	2.08
Navy	5.0	6	3/2	0/1	1/0	W	2.50
Creighton	6.0	5 (1)	2/2	3/2	1/1	W	2.62

### Situational Pitching ('03)

- .458 opp. leadoff on-base pct. (11 of 24)
- .146 opp. batting with runners on base (6-for-41)
- .333 opp. batting with two outs (10-for-30)

### Nine-Inning Averages ('03)

- 8.6 hits, 2.6 walks, 7.5 strikeouts, 10.5 groundouts, 37.1 batters faced
- 6.0 innings per start
- 2.9 K-to-walk ratio

### Career Stats vs. Villanova

1 GS, 1-0, 4.2 IP, R, 3 H, 7 BB, K, WP

**DON'T WALK!** – John Axford continues to turn in an impressive start to his sophomore season (2.63 ERA, 20 Ks and just seven walks in 24 innings, with a .258 opponent batting avg.) ... Axford is averaging just 2.6 walks per 9 IP (compared to 7.5 BB/9 IP in 2002).

**BIG EAST LEADER** – Axford ranks 2nd among BIG EAST pitchers in wins (3-0), 7th in ERA (2.62) and Ks (20) and 8th in IP (24).

**HARD TO HIT** – Axford has proven tough to hit in 21 outings with the Irish ... Axford has allowed just .238 opponent batting and 82 hits in 94.2 career innings at ND (7.8 H per 9 IP), surrendering just two home runs ... Axford rolled up his second and third double-play balls of the season in the Wake Forest game (plus a fourth in the win over Creighton), after serving up a team-best 18 DP groundballs in '02.

**SOPHOMORE SURGE?** – Axford is looking for more consistent pitch location in '03, after totaling the same number of walks and strikeouts (89) in his combined 2002 ND (59 BB/64 Ks) and Cape Cod League seasons (with the Hyannis Mets, 30 BB/25 Ks) ... Axford's .231 opponent batting was best among the 2002 staff (also 10th-best by an ND pitcher, since '91) and he actually turned in some of the best numbers ever by an ND freshman pitcher in the eight-year Paul Mainieri era (notably his 3.95 ERA, 70.2 IP and 64 Ks) – but his season was somewhat overshadowed by the dominating postseasons turned in by his classmates Grant Johnson and Chris Niesel.

**MAN WITH THE AX** – Axford's strong start to the 2003 season (2.08 ERA) has dropped his career ERA to 3.61 in 21 appearances and 94.2 IP, with the team's other starters for this weekend owning similar career ERAs: senior RHP **Ryan Kalita** (3.28) and sophomore RHP **Chris Niesel** (3.29), plus solid numbers from senior RHP relievers **J.P. Gagne** (4.24) and **Brandon Vilorio** (2.67).

## Game 3 Starter – Ryan Kalita

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'00	1/0	1.0	0 (.000, 0)	0/0	1/2	1/0	0-0 (0)	0.00
'01	4/2	11.0	10 (.238, 1)	4/3	9/8	5/0	2-0 (0)	2.45
'02	16/4	42.2	45 (.278, 2)	19/15	36/14	1/2	5-0 (0)	3.16
'03	3/2	14.0	13 (.265, 0)	8/7	9/10	3/3	1-0 (0)	4.50
<b>Car.</b>	<b>24/8</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>88 (.269, 3)</b>	<b>31/25</b>	<b>55/34</b>	<b>10/5</b>	<b>8-0 (0)</b>	<b>3.28</b>

### Kalita's 2003 Game-By-Game (starts vs. ASU, UNF)

Opponent	IP	H (HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
Arizona St.	3.2	4	4/3	3/6	1/1	–	7.36
Minnesota	3.1	6	3/3	0/3	0/1	–	7.71
North Fla.	7.0	3	1/1	6/1	2/1	W	4.50

### Situational Pitching ('03)

- .500 opp. leadoff on-base pct. (2 of 4)
- .222 opp. batting with runners on base (2-for-9)
- .000 opp. batting with two outs (0-for-12)

### Nine-Inning Averages ('03)

- 8.4 hits, 6.4 walks, 5.8 strikeouts, 12.9 groundouts, 41.8 batters faced
- 5.1 innings per start
- 0.9 K-to-walk ratio

### Career Stats vs. Villanova

1 GP, 2.0 IP, 3 R/2 ER, 4 H, 2 BB, 2 Ks, WP

**STARTERS DOMINATE AT KKC** – ND's starting pitchers at the Kennel Club Classic (**Chris Niesel** twice, **John Axford** twice, **Ryan Kalita**, **Peter Ogilvie** and **Tom Thornton**) combined for impressive numbers during that seven-game stretch, with a 2.09 combined ERA and .195 opponent batting avg., 41 Ks, just eight walks and 31 hits allowed in 43 innings.

**GOOSE EGGS ALL AROUND:** Current senior RHP **Ryan Kalita** had a unique memento from the 3-2, 10-inning win over Rutgers that clinched the 2002 BIG EAST Tournament title ... Kalita entered in the 5th inning and tossed seven shutout innings, allowing six hits and three walks (six Ks) ... what made that performance all the more remarkable was that Kalita took a linedrive off the right side of his forehead (off the bat of RU hitting ace Val Majewski), with the ball glancing off Kalita's glove before thumping off his skull ... after being examined by the medical staff (and monitored throughout the game), Kalita returned to the mound to continue the biggest outing of his career ... a couple hours later, as the Irish celebrated their first BIG EAST title on the field at Commerce Bank Ballpark, Kalita still was sporting the major welt – a fitting souvenir to his gutsy outing that wrapped up an NCAA bid for the Irish (and launched the run to the College World Series).

**ANOTHER BIG W:** Kalita also turned in a clutch effort as the starter in ND's key 2-1 win over Virginia Tech (4/12/02) ... that 7-inning game extended to 10, with the Irish outlasting the Hokies ace LHP (and eventual 1st-round draft pick) Joe Saunders ... Kalita logged the first six innings, allowing an unearned run (6 H, BB, 5 Ks) ... ND then won in the 10th, after Matt Bok's pinch-hit triple and Joe Thaman's single back to the mound ... that win essentially helped ND claim the BIG EAST's No. 1 seed, after the Irish and Hokies both finished 18-8 in league play – with ND going on to sweep the doubleheader for the eventual tiebreaker.

## J.P. Gagne

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'00	19/13	72.2	98 (.333, 6)	40/36	44/25	4/2	7-1 (0)	4.46
'01	17/13	70.2	79 (.280, 6)	47/42	47/21	1/5	5-5 (0)	5.35
'02	28/7	94.2	86 (.245, 7)	40/33	69/16	4/12	9-4 (6)	3.14
'03	7/0	12.2	15 (.288, 2)	12/7	9/5	0/0	2-2 (3)	4.97
<b>Car.</b>	<b>71/33</b>	<b>250.2</b>	<b>88 (.284, 21)</b>	<b>139/118</b>	<b>169/67</b>	<b>9/19</b>	<b>23-12 (9)</b>	<b>4.24</b>

### Gagne's 2003 Game-By-Game

Opponent	IP	H (HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
Dayton	1.0	1	0/0	1/0	0/0	SV	0.00
Arizona St.	0.2	6 (1)	9/4	0/3	0/0	L	21.60
Wake Forest	6.0	4	0/0	2/1	0/0	W	4.70
Vanderbilt	2.0	0	0/0	4/0	0/0	W	3.72
North Fla.	2.0	2	0/0	1/0	0/0	SV	3.09
Jacksonville	0.2	2 (1)	3/3	0/1	0/0	L	5.11
E. Illinois	0.1	0	0/0	1/0	0/0	SV	4.97

### Situational Pitching ('03)

- .385 opp. leadoff on-base pct. (5 of 13)
- .348 opp. batting with runners on base (8-for-23)
- .435 opp. batting with two outs (10-for-23)

### Nine-Inning Averages ('03)

- 10.7 hits, 3.6 walks, 6.4 Ks, 15.6 groundouts, 41.2 batters faced
- 1.8 K-to-walk ratio

### Career Stats vs. Villanova

4 GP/1 GS, 2.64, 2-1, 13.2 IP, 6 R/4 ER, 17 H, 5 BB, 9 Ks

### Notes

- Has posted a win, loss or save in all seven of his 2003 outings

**IN THE ND RECORD BOOK** – Gagne logged his 71st career outing in last week's second game vs. Navy, tying Tom Price for 4th in ND history and trailing only Chris Michalak (92 GP), Aaron Heilman (83) and Mike Coffey (73) ... Gagne's 250.2 career innings are 4.1 shy of cracking that ND top-10 list ... Gagne posted the 9th save of his career in the North Florida game, tying '96 graduate Rich Saugat for 6th in ND history ... Gagne (23-12) needs just one more save to join Michalak (34-13, 12 saves) and Heilman (43-7, 12 saves) as the only ND pitchers ever to post 20-plus wins and 10-plus saves in their Irish careers.

**CLOSING WITH THE CLOSER** – Gagne had some rocky moments early in the 2002 postseason but posted an amazing ratio of strikeouts (15) to walks (1) in 18 IP of '02 postseason ... his best two outings came at key times, retiring nine straight to close the 10-4 opening win at Florida State before coming on to strike out the side in the 9th inning of the 3-1 clincher in that Super-Regional series ... he also went 7-2 in his final nine decisions of the 2002 season.

**TEAM SPRING BREAK WRAPUP** – ND hit .299 in the Kennel Club Classic, led by junior 2B Steve Sollmann (.482, 13-for-27, 9 R, 3B, 2B, 6 RBI, 4 BB, K, 4-6 SB, 2 SAC), sophomore 3B/1B Matt Edwards (.393, 11-for-28, 5 R, HR, 3 2B, 9 RBI, BB, 3 HBP, 2 Ks), senior RF Kris Billmaier (.393, 11-for-28, 6 R, 3B, 4 2B, 6 RBI, 2 BB, HBP, K, 2 SF), and junior C Javi Sanchez (.333, 9-for-27, 4 R, HR, 2 2B, 5 RBI, 3 BB, HBP, K, SB) ... the Irish pitchers posted a 2.37 ERA for the week, with a .185 opponent batting average, 59 Ks, 14 walks and 41 hits allowed in 64.2 IP ... ND totaled nine errors and a .967 fielding pct. in the seven games ... the Irish are 19-5 in the state of Florida during the last four seasons, including 7-1 at the 2000 Kennel Club Classic (also 1-1 at the 2001 Devil Rays Classic, 3-1 at the '02 Homestead Challenge and 2-1 at Florida State in the '02 NCAA Super Regional series).

### Brandon Vloria

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'00	11/1	17.0	19 (.284, 0)	6/6	15/1	1/1	0-0 (0)	3.18
'01	12/0	21.2	21 (.241, 1)	10/8	8/5	0/2	3-1 (2)	3.32
'02	16/0	22.0	16 (.203, 1)	10/6	8/5	0/1	2-1 (3)	2.45
'03	5/0	6.2	2 (.095, 0)	0/0	3/0	0/0	1-0 (0)	0.00
<b>Car.</b>	<b>44/1</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>58 (.284, 2)</b>	<b>26/20</b>	<b>34/11</b>	<b>1/4</b>	<b>6-2 (5)</b>	<b>2.67</b>

#### Vloria's 2003 Game-By-Game

Opponent	IP	H (HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
Dayton	1.1	0	0/0	0/0	0/0	W	0.00
Arizona St.	1.1	0	0/0	0/0	0/0	-	0.00
Navy	2.0	0	0/0	1/0	0/0	-	0.00
Jacksonville	1.0	1	0/0	1/0	0/0	-	0.00
Creighton	1.0	1	0/0	1/0	0/0	-	0.00

#### Career Stats vs. Villanova

1 GP, R, 2 H, BB

**RECORD SETTER** – Vloria has retired 19 of the 21 batters he has faced this season (in four relief appearances) while his career walk ratio (1.47 BB per 9 IP; 11 BB in 67.1 IP) would best Alan Walania's ND record (1.64, from '90-'93) ... Vloria also now ranks 6th on the ND career ERA list, at 2.67.

**MR. CONTROL** – Vloria posted a 2.45 season ERA in 2002 (second-best on the staff), plus a 2-1 record and three saves, with just five walks in 21 IP (no wild pitches and one hit batter) and an eye-popping .203 opponent batting avg. (16-for-79) ... he has thrown just one wild pitch in 67.1 career innings, with just four hit batters .

**FIREMAN** – Vloria has inherited five baserunners in '03 (allowing none to score), after allowing seven of 15 inherited baserunners to score in 2002.

### Matt Laird

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'00	15/9	47.0	55 (.284, 2)	32/20	34/15	6/9	5-2 (0)	3.83
'01	22/0	32.0	23 (.209, 1)	11/11	28/15	4/6	5-1 (4)	3.09
'02	12/0	11.0	14 (.292, 0)	9/7	9/9	3/0	0-0 (1)	5.73
'03	4/0	3.2	3 (.214, 1)	5/5	5/7	3/1	0-0 (0)	12.27
<b>Car.</b>	<b>53/9</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>95 (.284, 4)</b>	<b>57/43</b>	<b>76/46</b>	<b>16/16</b>	<b>10-3 (5)</b>	<b>4.13</b>

#### Laird's 2003 Game-By-Game

Opponent	IP	H (HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
Arizona St.	1.0	2	4/4	2/4	2/0	-	36.00
Navy	1.0	0	0/0	1/1	0/0	-	18.00
E. Illinois	0.2	0	0/0	1/1	1/1	-	13.50
Creighton	1.0	1 (1)	1/1	1/1	0/0	-	12.27

#### Career Stats vs. Villanova

2 GP/1 GS, 2.0 IP, 3 E/1 ER, 3 H, 2 BB, 2 Ks

### Tom Thornton

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'03	4/1	11.1	9 (.231, 0)	2/1	1/4	0/3	1-0 (0)	0.79

#### Thornton's 2003 Game-By-Game (start in second Navy game)

Opponent	IP	H (HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
Arizona St.	2.1	3	1/1	0/1	0/1	-	3.86
Nebraska	4.0	3	1/0	1/1	0/1	-	1.42
Navy	1.0	0	0/0	0/2	0/0	-	1.23
Navy	4.0	3	0/0	0/0	0/1	W	0.79

### Martin Vergara

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'02	12/5	35.2	33 (.236, 1)	20/15	33/17	5/8	5-1 (0)	3.79
'03	3/0	6.0	6 (.250, 2)	8/8	2/5	2/2	0-0 (0)	12.00
<b>Car.</b>	<b>15/5</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>39 (.238, 3)</b>	<b>28/23</b>	<b>35/22</b>	<b>7/10</b>	<b>5-1 (0)</b>	<b>4.97</b>

#### Vergara's 2003 Game-By-Game

Opponent	IP	H (HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
Arizona St.	2.0	4 (2)	7/7	0/5	2/1	-	31.50
Jacksonville	3.0	2	1/1	2/0	0/1	-	14.40
Creighton	1.0	0	0/0	0/0	0/0	-	12.00

### Tyler Jones ('03 game vs. Navy)

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'02	4/1	9.0	9 (.243, 0)	5/4	6/9	1/0	1-0 (1)	4.00
'03	1/0	3.0	5 (.357, 0)	2/2	5/0	0/0	0-0 (0)	6.00
<b>Car.</b>	<b>5/1</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>14 (.275, 0)</b>	<b>7/6</b>	<b>11/9</b>	<b>1/0</b>	<b>1-0 (0)</b>	<b>4.50</b>

### Ryan Doherty

Yr.	GP/GS	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
'03	3/0	3.1	6 (.400, 0)	5/5	6/4	1/1	0-0 (0)	13.50

#### Doherty's 2003 Game-By-Game

Opponent	IP	H (HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP/HB	W-L (SV)	ERA
Dayton	0.2	4	5/5	0/2	0/1	-	67.50
Minnesota	0.2	0	0/0	2/2	0/0	-	33.75
Navy	2.0	2	0/0	4/0	1/0	-	13.50

**SENIOR SAVERS** – ND's senior class includes three RHPs – J.P. Gagne (9), Brandon Vloria (5) and Matt Laird (5) – who have totaled five-plus saves in their ND careers ... Laird and his three-quarters delivery produced four saves in the closing role with the 2001 team that climbed to No. 1 ... his '01 saves included the first of two wins on opening week at Mississippi State (7-5, 0.2 IP) and the final two innings to cap a 3-0 shutout of Cleveland State.

### INSIDE THE 2003 IRISH BULLPEN

Player	GP (Relief)	ERA	W-L(S)	IP	R/ER	H/Avg.	K/BB	HB	WP	1st Batter Faced	Inher. Run's/Scored
Vloria	5	0.00	1-1 (0)	6.2	0/0	2/.095	3/0	0	0	1-for-4	5/0
Thornton	3	1.23	0-0 (0)	7.1	2/1	6/.250	1/4	2	0	1-for-1, BB, HB	3/1
Gagne	7	4.97	2-2 (3)	12.2	12/7	15/.288	9/5	0	0	2-for-6, K	2/0
Jones	1	6.00	0-0 (1)	3.0	2/2	5/.357	5/0	0	0	0-for-1	0/0
Kalita	1	8.10	0-0 (0)	3.1	3/3	6/.545	0/3	1	0	BB	0/0
Vergara	3	12.00	0-0 (0)	6.0	8/8	6/.250	2/5	2	2	0-for-3, K	0/0
Laird	4	12.27	0-0 (0)	3.2	5/5	3/.214	5/7	1	3	0-for-2, K, 2 BB	0/0
Doherty	3	13.50	0-0 (0)	3.1	3/3	6/.400	6/4	1	1	0-for-2, K, BB	1/0
Wilkins	1	27.00	0-0 (0)	1.0	2/1	4/.800	1/1	0	0	0-for-1, K	0/0
<b>Bullpen Totals</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6.51</b>	<b>3-2 (3)</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>40/34</b>	<b>53/.294</b>	<b>32/29</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4-for-20, 5 BB, HB, 5 Ks</b>	<b>11/1 (.091)</b>



## TEAM NOTES

**K-BB RATIOS START TO EVEN OUT** – The Notre Dame hitters and pitchers had subpar ratios of walks to strikeouts during the first two weeks but saw those numbers improve at the Kennel Club Classic ... most notably, the ND pitchers totaled 15 more walks than Ks in the first seven games (-15) but were +45 in the K-to-walk ratio at the KCC ... the Irish batters were -41 in walk-to-K ratio during the first two weeks but just -14 in Jacksonville:

### *First 7 Games*

Batters BB-to-K Ratio: 16 BB, 57 Ks (0.28 ratio; -41 margin)

Pitchers K-to-BB Ratio: 25 Ks, 40 BB (0.63; -15)

### *Last 8 Games*

Batters BB-to-K Ratio: 13 BB, 27 Ks (0.48; -14)

Pitchers K-to-BB Ratio: 59 Ks, 14 BB (4.21; +45)

**GETTING DEFENSIVE** – Despite losing four starters in the field from the 2002 CWS team (CF Steve Stanley, C Paul O'Toole, 3B Andrew Bushey and LF Brian Stavisky), ND's defense has been steady ... the Irish have posted five error-free efforts in the last nine games while the team's overall .969 fielding pct. ranks as one of the highest in recent memory ... the Irish defense nearly has turned as many double plays (15) as errors made (18) ... all of the ND outfielders have yet to make errors in 2003, with junior 2B Steve Sollmann totaling just one E in 81 fielding chances (.986) ... Sollmann made just eight errors in 2002 and has totaled just two Es in his last 31 games with the Irish.

**EARLY CHALLENGES** – Notre Dame completed one of the most challenging five-game stretches in the program's history, with a pair of games at then-No. 4 Arizona State (which has climbed as high as No. 1) before the daunting Dairy Queen Classic field that included Nebraska (ranked as high as 12th), the host Gophers (who beat the Irish with 5,343 Metrodome fans cheering them on) and Wake Forest (ranked as high as 7th) ... the Irish then lost an extra-inning game at Jacksonville.

**BEEN THERE** – Notre Dame played to extra innings in three of the first 11 games of the '03 season, beating Wake Forest (2-1, in 13) and Vanderbilt (2-1, in 10) before dropping a 9-6, 10-inning game at Jacksonville ... the Irish now own a mark of 16-3-1 in their last 20 extra-inning games (dating back to '97; 7-2 in last nine, dating back to the '01 NCAAs).

**THREE-QUARTERS LEFT TO GO** – The Irish traditionally have started slow (now 25-25 in Jan./Feb. during the nine-year Paul Mainieri era) compared to 104-43-1 in March and 159-36 in April, with plenty of the 56-game regular season still to be played.

**STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE** – Junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** made a fielding error in the Nebraska game, which remains just his second error in his last 31 games with the Irish (prior to the Villanova series) ... a converted CF, Sollmann totaled just eight Es in 2002 ... Sollmann had not struck out in 16 games with ND, including nine NCAA Tournament games in 2002, before a pair of Ks vs. Minnesota (he totaled just three multi-K games in 2002) and one last week vs. Creighton.

**SCOUTING THE IRISH** – Notre Dame returns the bulk of its pitching staff and several position starters, led by senior RF **Kris Billmaier**, junior 2B **Steve Sollmann**, junior 1B **Joe Thaman** and junior **Javi Sanchez** (made shift from SS to C) ... highly-touted sophomore SS **Matt Macri** made his ND debut at that position in the opener vs. Dayton, after missing most of his freshman season due to injury (he was limited to 14 starts at DH and two at 2B in '02), while his classmate **Matt Edwards** (1B/3B) also has returned from a major 2002 injury (broken leg, 9 GP).

**INJURY UPDATE:** Sophomore RHP **Grant Johnson** and sophomore DH **Brent Weiss** both are slated to miss the 2003 season after undergoing preseason shoulder surgery.

**SCORING STREAKS** – Notre Dame saw its team-record scoring streak end on May 15, 2002, in an 11-0 loss to BIG EAST rival Rutgers ... the Irish scored in the final 57 games of '99, in every game of 2000 (64) and '01 (63), and in the first 46 of 2002 – for a **230-game scoring streak** that stretched back to a 12-0 loss at Florida International (2/21/99) ... the previous record 132-game scoring streak began with the first game of the Paul Mainieri era, a 10-6 loss to Texas at the Anaheim Classic, on Feb. 24, 1995 (the Irish were shut out by Auburn, 8-0, in the '94 NCAA East Regional at Clemson) ... that streak ended vs. another Texas team, 2-0 vs. Texas Pan-American in a seven-inning game on March 10, 1997 (in San Antonio) ... ND has **scored in 98.8 pct. of its games in the Mainieri era (505 of 511)**, with the other shutouts vs. BIG EAST teams: at Seton Hall (16-0; 3/22/97), vs. St. John's (3-0; 5/9/98) and vs. Rutgers in the BIG EAST Tournament (12-0; 5/16/98). The Irish have **scored in 309 of 311 non-conference games** during the Mainieri era (99.4%), including **148 straight**.

## Career Record Book

### Batting Average

1. Dan Peltier (1987-89) .....	.406
2. Eric Danapilis (1990-93) .....	.405
3. Steve Stanley (1999-02) .....	.384
4. Scott Sollmann (1994-96) .....	.372
5. <b>Steve Sollmann (2001- )</b> .....	<b>.369</b>
6. Robbie Kent (1993-94) .....	.368
Brant Ust (1997-99) .....	.368
8. Pat Pesavento (1986-89) .....	.367
9. Randall Brooks (1994-97) .....	.364
10. Mike Amrhein (1994-97) .....	.361
11. James Sass (1988-89) .....	.357
12. Brian Stavisky (2000-02) .....	.355

### Stolen Bases

7. Eric Danapilis (1990-93) .....	46
8. <b>Steve Sollmann (2001- )</b> .....	<b>38</b>

### Victories

8. Pat Leahy (1990-92) .....	25-7
Alex Shilliday (1996-99) .....	25-17
10. <b>J.P. Gagne (2000- )</b> .....	<b>23-12</b>

### Earned-Run Average (min. 60 IP)

5. Phil Donnelly (1961-63) .....	2.52
6. <b>Brandon Vilorio (2000- )</b> .....	<b>2.67</b>
6. Brian Piotrowicz (1987-90) .....	2.72
7. Tom Price (1991-94) .....	2.82

### Fewest Walks Per 9 IP (min. 60 IP)

1. <b>Brandon Vilorio (2000- )</b> .....	<b>1.47</b>
2. Alan Walania (1990-93) .....	1.64
3. Tom Price (1991-94) .....	1.86
4. James Cross (1983, '85-'86) .....	1.88
5. Nick Palihniich (1958-60) .....	1.94
6. Darin Schmalz (1994-97) .....	2.05
7. <b>Chris Niesel (2002- )</b> .....	<b>2.11</b>
8. Mike Naumann (1998-2001) .....	2.23
9. Scott Cavey (1997-2000) .....	2.24
10. Jim Gibbons (1952-53) .....	2.33
11. <b>J.P. Gagne (2000- )</b> .....	<b>2.41</b>
12. A.J. Jones (1993-94) .....	2.46
13. Danny Tamayo (1998, 2000-01) .....	2.48
– <b>Peter Ogilvie (2001- )</b> .....	<b>2.66</b>

### Pitching Appearances

1. Chris Michalak (1990-93) .....	92
2. Aaron Heilman (1998-2001) .....	83
3. Mike Coffey (1987-90) .....	73
4. Tom Price (1991-94) .....	71
<b>J.P. Gagne (2000- )</b> .....	<b>71</b>

### Innings Pitched

10. Tom Buknowski (1952, '56-'57) .....	255.0
– <b>J.P. Gagne (2000- )</b> .....	<b>250.2</b>

### Saves

5. Larry Mohs (1994-97) .....	10
6. Rich Sauget (1994-96) .....	9
7. Alan Walania (1990-93) .....	8
– <b>J.P. Gagne (2000- )</b> .....	<b>8</b>

### Strikeouts

10. Pat Leahy (1990-92) .....	192
Darin Schmalz (1994-97) .....	192
– <b>J.P. Gagne (2000- )</b> .....	<b>169</b>

### Fielding Putouts

1. Joe Binkewicz (1989-92) .....	1,583
2. Jeff Felker (1997-2000) .....	1,411
3. Paul O'Toole (1999-2002) .....	1,347
4. <b>Joe Thaman (2001- )</b> .....	<b>1,205</b>

### Fielding Assists

8. Mike Moshier (1986-89) .....	400
– <b>Steve Sollmann (2001- )</b> .....	<b>375</b>

## PRESEASON HONORS

**THREE NAMED PRESEASON ALL-AMERICANS** – An unprecedented three Notre Dame players – junior 2B **Steve Sollmann**, sophomore SS **Matt Macri** and sophomore RHP Grant **Johnson** – were tabbed for preseason All-America honors, with Sollmann and Macri earning preseason BIG EAST player-of-the-year recognition from different sources (see listings on p. 3).

**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 second basemen and five shortstops 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 *Collegiate Baseball*) 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.

**PROSPECTS-A-PLENTY** – Six Irish players also have been listed among national college prospect rankings, as compiled by *Baseball America/Perfect Game* and Team One Baseball ... the Dec. 15 *BA/PG* list forecasting the top-100 prospects for the 2004 draft included four ND sophomore RHPs: **Grant Johnson** (5th), **John Axford** (19th), **Chris Niesel** (49th) and **Martin Vergara** (78th) ... no other school had more than three pitchers among that top-100 prospects list (Rice had three, Texas and Old Dominion two) ... Macri (a draft-eligible sophomore) was listed 40th (second among shortstops) on the *BA/PG* prospects list for the 2003 draft while Sollman was 124th on that list ... two other sophomores from BIG EAST teams – Boston College RHP Chris Lambert (12th) and Rutgers OF Jeff Frazier (17th) – also are among the top prospects on the *BA/PG* top-100 prospects list for the 2004 draft ... the BIG EAST is the only conference with four-plus schools represented on that top-100 prospect list while the six total BIG EAST players matches the ACC for the most from one conference among the *BA/PG* top 100 prospects for the '04 draft.

**NIESEL HIGHLY-REGARDED** – Sophomore RHP **Chris Niesel** impressively was forecasted by the Major League Scouting Bureau’s 2002 fall rankings as the No. 1 overall college prospect for the 2004 draft, followed by Florida State SS Stephen Drew, Ohio State LHP Scott Lewis, Vanderbilt LHP Jeremy Sowers and Clemson LHP Tyler Lumsden ... the Irish saw Lewis and Drew up-close during the 2002 NAAs (posting a pair of wins over both OSU and FSU) and could face Sowers at next week’s Kennel Club Classic in Jacksonville (Lumsden and his Clemson teammates joined Niesel and the Irish at the 2002 CWS).

### **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 freshman prospect (*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 Prospects Plus*, 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; injured) – Nation’s #5 college prospect for 2004 draft (*BA/PG*, 12/15/02), preseason third team All-American (*Collegiate Baseball* magazine, NCBWA), preseason all-BIG EAST (coaches, *BA*), BE’s #1 prospect and best control pitcher (*BA*)

**SIX IN BIG-LEAGUE CAMP** – Three former Notre Dame baseball players currently are on 40-man rosters for MLB Spring Training: IF **Craig Counsell** (Arizona), RHP **Brad Lidge** (Houston) and LHP **Tim Kalita** (Detroit) ... three others are 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) and **Christian Parker** (Yankees) and LHP **Chris Michalak** (Colorado).

**OTHER PRO PLAYERS** – Seven other former ND players are in minor-league spring training: C **Paul O’Toole** (Cubs), 3B/C **Andrew Bushey** (Colorado), OFs **Steve Stanley** and **Brian Stavisky** (both with Oakland), IF **Brant Ust** (Detroit), RHP **Danny Tamayo** (Kansas City) and OF **Matt Bok** (Los Angeles).

## TEAM NOTES

**GAGNE RECEIVES BIG EAST SCHOLARSHIP** – Senior righthander **J.P. Gagne** – an Academic All-America candidate who carries a 3.35 cumulative GPA as a finance major – recently was named the 2002-03 BIG EAST/Aéropostale Male Scholar-Athletes of the Year for Notre Dame and will receive a \$2,000 stipend, which will be applied to graduate studies (he intends to pursue postgraduate studies in law or business) ... Gagne joins former LHP Mike Naumann ('01) as the second ND baseball player to receive the BIG EAST postgraduate scholarship in the last three years ... he combines with Virginia Tech shortstop Spencer Harris and West Virginia third baseman Tim McCabe as the only 2003 baseball players who were selected by their respective schools as the BIG EAST scholarship recipients.

**SLUMP BUSTERS** – Notre Dame's winning sequence in the 13th inning vs. Wake Forest included hits from several players who had struggled in their previous at-bats at the DQ Classic ... ND entered the bottom of the 13th riding a frustrating 0-for-12 day with runners in scoring position before staging the winning rally ... three freshmen sparked the sequence with singles, as CF **Cody Rizzo** ended a 1-for-11 slump by sending RHP Adam Hanson's first-pitch offering into center field (he then was picked off for the second out) before reserve DH **Alex Nettey** (who was 1-for-5 in '03) stroked another first pitch into shallow left field ... LF **Craig Cooper** then snapped out of his 0-for-9 funk by delivered on a 1-0 pitch, placing a linedrive into left-center that moved Nettey to third (Cooper took second on a bad throw) ... junior 1B **Joe Thaman** shook off his own 0-for-9 slump by working ahead in the count before sending an 0-2 pitch that sliced between the second-base bag and a diving 2B Chris Getz, with Nettey racing home to end the three-hour, 44-minute game.

**EXTRA-INNING DRAMA** – Junior 1B **Joe Thaman** now has ended two noteworthy extra-inning games for the Irish ... as a freshman, Thaman hit a double that held up as the game-winner in a similar game at Mississippi State early in the 2001 season (4-2, in 11 innings) ... much like the 2002 game at MSU (which would have ended in a tie after the 11th inning), Sunday's game could have ended as a tie in the record books if neither team had scored by the end of the 14th.

**THE RIGHT STUFF** – ND's lineup – predominantly lefthanded the past four seasons – will take on a decidedly lefthanded slant in 2003, following the graduation of four lefthanded starters (CF and leadoff batter Steve Stanley, 3B/cleanup/#5 hitter Andrew Bushey, C Paul O'Toole and DH Matt Bok) and the pro signing of junior LF/3-hole hitter Brian Stavisky ... those five players were among the teams' top hitters from 2000-02, with Stanley, Bushey and O'Toole also playing in 1999 alongside fellow lefthanded hitters Jeff Felker (1B, '97-'00), Ben Cooke (IF/OF, '98-'01) and Jeff Perconte (IF/OF, '97-'00) ... junior 1B Joe Thaman is the only lefthanded hitter among the returning starters, with 2B **Steve Sollmann**, RF **Kris Billmaier** and C **Javi Sanchez** (the '02 SS) all hitting from the right side ... the spots held by Stanley and Bushey both have been filled by righthanded hitters (freshmen CF **Craig Cooper/Cody Rizzo** and sophomore 3B **Matt Edwards**) while O'Toole's spot essentially has been filled by sophomore righthanded-hitting SS **Matt Macri** (after Sanchez' switch to C) ... freshman LF **Brennan Grogan** gives the Irish another lefthanded bat at that position while his classmate **Steve Andres** is available to fill the lefthanded DH role.

**ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICA CANDIDATES** – Several Notre Dame players will be under consideration for Academic All-America honors in 2003, with an unmatched two ND baseball players earning that honor in each of the past three seasons ... top Academic All-America candidates in 2003 include senior RHPs **Brandon Vilorio** (3.63, electrical engineering), **J.P. Gagne** (3.35, finance) and **Peter Ogilvie** (3.21, product design), plus junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** (3.26, marketing).

### HEAD COACH PAUL MAINIERI

Ninth-year Notre Dame head coach Paul Mainieri owns a 695-426-1 (.620) record in 20-plus college seasons ... in addition to his 363-147-1 (.711) mark in eight-plus seasons at ND, Mainieri's teams were 180-121 in six seasons at St. Thomas (Fla.) and 152-158 in six seasons at Air Force ... his ND teams have combined for a 121-41 (.747) record in regular-season BIG EAST games, making the Irish skipper the winningest coach in BIG EAST history (based on win pct.) ... he also ranks second all-time at ND in career coaching wins, behind Hall of Famer Jake Kline (558-449-5, 1934-75)

**GAME #500** – The first game vs. Arizona State during opening week was the 500th game of the Paul Mainieri era at Notre Dame (he enters this week 363-147-1 at ND) ... Mainieri is nearing his 700th win as a college head coach (695-426-1, in 20-plus seasons).

**HONORARY MONOGRAM** – Paul Mainieri counted himself among those who were not surprised in the least when his Notre Dame baseball team made its historic run to the 2002 College World Series, an accomplishment that was recognized with the Sept. 14 ring ceremony at Eck Stadium (see linked photo gallery) ... but he was the most surprised spectator at the end of that ceremony, when the Notre Dame National Monogram Club presented the ninth-year Irish coach with an honorary Notre Dame varsity monogram.

### MONTH-BY-MONTH WITH THE IRISH

Notre Dame traditionally has posted a better won-loss record in the second half of the season, with the first nine seasons of the Paul Mainieri era (including last week) featuring a 129-68-1 (.654) combined record during Jan.-March and a 234-79 (.748) record during April-June (a difference of nearly 100 pct. points).

#### ND's Monthly Record in the Mainieri Era

	Feb.*	March	April	May*
1995	1-2	10-8	24-6	5-5
1996	3-3	14-4	18-7	9-4
1997	3-3	10-8	20-6	8-2
1998	5-6*	10-3	20-3	6-5
1999	3-4	13-3	18-4	9-7
2000	2-1	14-4	20-6	10-7
2001	5-1	15-3-1	20-2	9-7
2002	1-2	11-8	19-2	19-6*
2003	2-3	7-2	—	—
<b>Tot.</b>	<b>25-25</b>	<b>104-42-1</b>	<b>159-36</b>	<b>75-43</b>
	<b>(.500)</b>	<b>(.711)</b>	<b>(.815)</b>	<b>(.636)</b>

\*Note: The 5-6 start in 1998 included 1-1 in Jan., the 19-6 finish in '02 included 5-3 in June.