

NOTRE DAME BASEBALL GAME NOTES – vs. BALL STATE (APRIL 22, 2003)

The Notre Dame baseball team (29-8, 10-2 BIG EAST) – ranked as high as 16th in the national polls – will look to continue its winning ways with a midweek challenge vs. Ball State (26-11) ... ND again is on the verge of reaching 30 wins with single-digit losses and could get to 30 in the 38th game (matching the '89 team, bested only by the 30-5-1 start in '01) ... last week's Thurs./Sat. BIG EAST format has produced sophomore RHP Chris Niesel (2.88, 5-1, 55 Ks, 11 BB in 59.1 IP) as the probable ND starter, with BSU to counter with freshman RHP Joe Ness (4.71, 3-1, 21 Ks, 13 BB in 28.2 IP) ... ND is ranked 27th in the nation for team ERA (3.55) and fielding pct. (.970),, BSU is 11th in team batting (.333).

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

* - 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 (Metrodome)	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. Eastern 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
Totals		59.1	52	23	19	11	55	1	5	3	78		5-1	2.88

Niesel's Nine-Inning Averages: 7.9 hits, 1.7 walks, 8.3 Ks, 11.2 groundouts (6.2 IP per outing)

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	2.88	5-1	9/9	2	0	59.1	52	23	19	11	55	13-2-1	245/.228	5	3
Totals	3.14	9-1	23/20	2	2	131.2	120	56	46	29	117	30-2-8	552/.235	7	7

NIESEL NOTES

* Since suffering the only loss of his ND career (Feb. 28 vs. Nebraska), **Chris Niesel** has dominated in his last seven outings to the tune of a 1.64 ERA, a .202 opp. batting avg. and nearly a 7-to-1 K-to-walk ratio (52/8) in those seven 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**, six hits (.188 opp. avg.) and no walks in the **1st inning** this season (9 IP, 12 Ks) while allowing just **one run in the 4th** (9 IP, 7 H, .212, 5 Ks, 1 BB) ... has averaged nearly 20 outs per 9 IP via Ks (8.3) or groundouts (11.2).

* Owns a **5.0 season K-to-walk** ratio that would rank 5th in ND history ... his **4.04 career K-to-BB** ratio (117/29) is ahead of Alan Walania's ND record (4.00).

* Situational pitching: .216 opp. batting with 2 outs, .224 with runners on; .311 opponent leadoff on-base pct.

* His season **walk average of 1.67/9 IP** would rank 11th in ND history ... his **1.98 career walk avg.** is 5th in the ND record book (best since '94).

* 55 Ks in '03, on pace for 94 (would be 7th-best in ND history) ... his .228 opp. batting would rank 10th (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 four 9-K games in his ND career (three 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).

* His 9-1 career record could include upwards of eight 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), with 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).

THREE-GUN SALUTE – ND's three-man pitching rotation is unmatched among the BIG EAST stat leaders ... sophomore RHP **John Axford** (8-0) has the most wins of any BIG EAST pitcher, also ranking third in ERA (2.29), strikeouts (53) and low opponent batting average (.216) and fourth in innings pitched (55.0) ... his classmate **Chris Niesel** checks in at second in Ks (55), third in innings (59.1), fifth in ERA (2.88) and opponent batting (.228) ... senior RHP **Ryan Kalita** ranks sixth among BIG EAST pitchers in opponent batting (.228) ... in conference games only, Kalita owns the third-best ERA in the conference stats (1.67) while ranking first in wins (4-0) and second in opponent batting (.167) ... Axford's stats in three BIG EAST starts include a 2.25 ERA (5th), .148 opponent batting (1st) and a 3-0 record (4th) while Niesel also is 3-0 in league action with a 2.63 ERA (7th), 28 Ks (5th) and 27.1 innings (8th) ... ND leads the BIG EAST with a 2.39 staff ERA in conference games, with four of the top-seven individual ERA leaders as senior closer **J.P. Gagne** is 6th (2.25).

SERIES NOTES – Notre Dame holds a 13-10 series edge vs. Ball State, dating back to 1976 – but BSU has won three of the last four ... the Cardinals hold the series edge in games played at ND (8-7, 2-1 at Eck Stadium) ... the series has featured five one-run games (three won by ND) while the series scoring is fairly even (95-86 edge for BSU).

RECAPPING THE LAST TWO ND-BSU GAMES

ND 10, BSU 1 (2002) – **Andrew Bushey's** first career grand-slam home run – at any level – highlighted a productive night for the Irish offense while **J.P. Gagne** notched his third win in six days (4 IP from 3rd-7th, 15 BF, 2 H, BB, 3 Ks) ... ND stranded just six baserunners while rapping out 13 hits, five for extra bases ... Bushey's bases-clearing home run doubled the Irish lead in the bottom of the 7th (9-1), after **Joe Thaman's** 3-run shot had yielded a 5-1 lead in the 2nd ... Thaman nearly added an opposite-field shot in the 7th, with his double down hitting off the leftfield wall, just a few feet inside the foul pole ... **Andrew Anderson** (1.1 IP, 5 R/3 ER, 6 H, K, HB) took the loss.

BSU 4, ND 3 (2001) – LHP **Luke Hagerty** (5.2 IP, 3 R/2 ER, 9 H, 4 BB, 4 Ks) picked up the win of the season while the Ball State offense cashed in a pair of ND errors for two crucial runs ... the 6th-ranked Irish had plenty of chances (12 hits, none extra bases, and 18 total baserunners) but ND left 13 men on base while also hitting into a double play and having another runner picked off ... **Peter Ogilvie** (6 IP, 2 R, 8 H, 5 Ks) was the hard-luck loser, allowing a pair of runs in the 3rd ... ND scored an unearned run in the 3rd and both teams added single runs in the 5th and 6th ... the game brought back memories of the previous series meeting, with BSU also winning by a 4-3 score at Eck Stadium in '98 ... **Paul Henry**, BSU's starting SS, picked up the save (2 IP, 2 H).

RARE WINS – In the nine-year Paul Mainieri era, just 29 teams have defeated the Irish at Eck Stadium (doing so a total of 44 times) ... Ball State (wins in '98 and '01) is one of just nine teams ever to post multiple regular-season wins over the Irish at Eck Stadium (since '95) ... Rutgers (4-5) and St. John's (4-6) own the most opponent wins at Eck Stadium in the Mainieri era, followed by Pittsburgh (3-11), West Virginia (3-10) and Wisconsin-Milwaukee (3-7) ... three other teams join Ball State with two wins over ND at The Eck during the past nine seasons: Connecticut (2-5), Boston College (2-9) and Northwestern (2-0) ... in postseason action, Wright State beat the Irish twice in the 1995 MCC Tournament while Florida International topped ND twice in the 2001 NCAA Regionals (both pairs of wins came at The Eck).

ND CAREER STATS VS. BALL STATE

Steve Sollmann – 4-for-7, RBI, 2 R, 2 BB, 2 SB

Joe Thaman – 4-for-8, 3 RBI, 2 R, HR, 2B, 3 Ks

Kris Billmaier – 2-for-9, R

Mike Holba – 1-for-1, 2B, BB

Javi Sanchez – 0-for-4, 4 Ks

Zach Sisko – 0-for-1, K

J.P. Gagne – 4 IP, 1-0, 2 H, BB, 3 Ks ('01)

Schroeder – 1B-II, 2-3

Snyder – L-9, L-4

Holman - KS

Bucholtz – 1-3

Scott – P-1 BU

Brandon Vilorio – 1 IP, BB ('01)

Holman – BB

Scott – 6-3

BALL STATE CAREER STATS VS. ND

Brad Snyder – 2-for-8, R, 2B, 2 Ks, CS

Lorenzo Scott – 0-for-4, BB

Kiel Holman – 0-for-2, BB, K

Marc Franz – 0-for-1

Adam Metzler – 0-for-1, K

James Nowicki – 1 GP

Kory Bucklew – 5 IP, 4 R, 4 H, 3 BB, 3 Ks ('02)

Sollmann – 1-3, F-9

Billmaier – F-8, 1B-RC

Sanchez – KS, KS

Thaman – 3-1, KL

Holba – 2B-LC, BB

John Petitbone – 2 GP, 1.0 IP, H, BB, K, WP

Sollmann – BB/RBI ('01) ... 1B-9

Billmaier – L-7

Sanchez - KS

Andrew Anderson – 1.1 IP, 0-1, 5 R/3 ER, 6 H, K, HB ('02)

Sollmann – 1B-MI/R

Billmaier – 1B-LS/R

Sanchez – KS

Thaman – HR-9/3 RBI

Mike Johnston – 1.0 IP, H ('01)

Billmaier – FF-5

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

(1) Steve Sollmann (Jr., 2B; Cincinnati, OH ... preseason All-American; all-BIG EAST in '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	.396	37/37	149	45	59	9-4-3	28	85/.570	17	0	10	1	.455	1	4	23-29	4 (.978)
Tot.	.370	157/155	583	150	216	26-10-10	111	292/.501	69	7	57	4	.436	10	16	52-69	33 (.955)

* **Leads team in eight** categories – batting avg. (.396), runs (45), hits (59), total bases (85), walks (17), stolen bases (23), on-base pct. (.455) and leadoff on-base pct. (.576) ... also 2nd in seven other categories – slugging (.570), triples (4), RBI (28), batting with runners in scoring position (.391), 2-out batting (.353), 2-out RBI (10) and pct. of runners advanced (.629) – plus 3rd in home runs (3) and 4th in doubles (9).

* Entered week ranked **19th in nation with 0.61 stolen bases** per game (0.62) ... also ranks 6th among BIG EAST players in batting avg., plus 1st in runs and SBs, 2nd in TBs and 3Bs, 4th in hits and 9th in slugging

* Carries **10-game hitting streak** into Ball State game (15-for-35/.429, 4 RBI, 13 R, 3 2B, 3B, 5 BB, K) ... also has hits in 19 of last 20 games (his 9-game hit streak ended vs. WMU).

* Has gone 15 games (43 chances) without an error (just four Es all season) and seven games without a strikeout.

* Has gone **hitless in consecutive games just once** in '03 (in Villanova doubleheader), **with hits in 31 of 37** games.

* Owns **21 multi-hit** games in 2003 (five 3-hit games, plus 4-for-4 in game 2 vs. Georgetown)

* Already 7th in ND history **with 52 career stolen bases** (23 in '03), two behind former teammate Paul O'Toole

* Picked up 200th career hit at St. John's (now 216; ND record for hits by junior is Steve Stanley's 267)

* Joins classmate Javi Sanchez (122 BB/8 Ks) as only ND starters with **more walks (17) than Ks (10)** in 2003

* 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

* Rated BIG EAST's **top defensive 2B** for 2003 (per *Baseball America*)

(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	.304	33/31	115	25	35	1-5-0	18	46/.400	6	2	8	1	.350	0	8	10-13	1 (.973)

* First on team in triples (5) and sac. bunts (8), 2nd in stolen bases (10) and 2-out RBI (10), 3rd in batting with runners in scoring position (.372) and 2-out batting (.333), 4th in pct. of runners advanced (.584) and 5th in batting (.304) and runs (25)

* Leads BIG EAST in overall triples, 12th in SBs ... entered week ranked **19th in nation for triples** (0.15 per game)

* Made switch to CF and **2-hole** (26 starts batting 2nd) on Spring Break trip, **shifted to LF** in last eight games

(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	.348	36/36	135	24	47	10-1-7	44	80/.593	14	3	19	4	.416	2	0	1-4	4 (.979)
Tot.	.337	45/44	166	27	56	11-1-7	48	90/.542	17	4	25	5	.407	2	0	2-5	10 (.956)

* **First on team in six** categories – home runs (7, four of the last five being CF blasts, plus monster shot to left that landed in ND football practice field), slugging pct. (.593), RBI (44), 2-out batting (.400), 2-out RBI (16) and batting with runners in scoring pos. (.393) – plus 2nd in batting avg. (.348), doubles (10), hits (47), total bases (80) and walks (14), 3rd in pct. of runners advanced (.588) and 4th in on-base pct. (.416).

* Leads BIG EAST in overall RBI, plus 3rd in TBs, 4th in HRs, 7th in slugging and 9th in 2Bs

* Looking to end 1-for-15, 3-RBI slump during last five games.

* Already has totaled **14 multi-RBI** games, including four 3-RBI games, 4 RBI in second game vs. Georgetown and 5 RBI in third game vs. Creighton

* Also owns **13 multi-hit** games (five 3-hit games, plus 4-for-5 in nightcap at St. John's)

* Saw 9-game hitting streak end in doubleheader vs. Chicago State and Bowling Green (0-for-4)

* Named 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 the doubleheader sweep at St. John's, with five RBI and a pair of booming HRs to dead-center field.

* Has made 18 starts at 1B, with the first coming on Spring Break trip, with 29 total starts batting in the 3-hole

* 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)

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	.296	37/36	141	26	40	10-1-4	26	64/.454	13	4	15	4	.350	5	1	1-1	1 (.985)
Tot.	.296	191/174	636	112	188	30-2-14	123	264/.415	65	21	73	8	.374	10	14	7-11	11 (.955)

* Second on team in doubles (10, good for 9th in BIG EAST), home runs (4), 3rd in hits (40), RBI (26), runs scored (26), total bases (64) and hit-by-pitch (4), 3rd in leadoff on-base pct. (.484), 4th in walks (13)

* Owns 12 multi-hit and six multi-RBI games

* Made switch from right to center field in last five games ... hit cleanup in 27 games this season before batting 5th in Seton Hall doubleheader

* Ended 1-for-20 slump (.050, 2 RBI) in Seton Hall opener (3-for-3, 2 RBI, HR), also marking 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 (.750)
'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	.300	32/32	120	24	36	8-1-1	14	49/.408	12	3	8	1	.375	1	0	2-2	5 (.980)
Tot.	.277	107/99	364	74	101	15-4-6	43	142/.390	37	8	42	4	.355	2	8	3-3	34 (.936)

* Fifth on team in hits (36), leadoff on-base pct. (.394) and batting with runners in scoring position (.324).

* Saw 8-game hitting streak end in Seton Hall opener (streak included four games before missing four due to back spasms).

* Has gone hitless in consecutive games just twice all season (vs. Detroit and Valparaiso, then in SHU doubleheader)

* Owns 12 multi-hit games in 2003 (3rd-most on team), with three multi-RBI games

* Has hit five of his six career home runs with the Irish away from home, including 3-run blast to tie 2002 CWS opener vs. Stanford (3-3, 4-3 loss)

* Joins classmate Steve Sollmann (17 BB/10 Ks) as only ND starters with more walks (12) than Ks (8) 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	.304	35/35	125	26	38	11-4-2	20	63/.504	14	3	24	0	.387	0	5	2-3	11 (.931)
Tot.	.269	52/51	193	36	52	14-4-3	33	83/.430	21	3	48	0	.347	2	5	3-5	11 (.936)

* Leads team in doubles (11, good for 5th in BIG EAST), 2nd in walks (14), triples (4, 2nd BIG EAST) and sac. bunts (5), 3rd in runs scored (26), 4th in hits (38), total bases (56), and slugging pct. (.504), 5th in RBI (20).

* Has hits in eight of last 10 games, batting .455 in that stretch (15-for-33, 8 RBI, 8 R)

* Third on team with 12 multi-hit games, plus four multi-RBI games

* Has made most of his starts batting in the 6-hole (16), 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*)

(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	.336	32/31	107	34	36	9-1-3	24	56/.523	5	16	22	3	.438	2	1	1-1	3 (.952)

* Leads team in hit-by-pitch (16, ND record), 2nd in runs scored (34, good for 8th in the BIG EAST) and leadoff on-base pct. (.528), 3rd in home runs (3) batting avg. (.336), slugging (.523) and on-base pct. (.438), 4th in RBI (24), doubles (9) and batting with runners in scoring position (.341), 5th in total bases (56).

* Batting just .222 (6-for-27) with one multi-hit total in last seven games

* Classic utility player who has made starts at CF (4), LF (13), DH (6) and C (3) and now RF (5), also batting in leadoff spot early in season (his most common lineup spot has been 14 games in the 7-hole)

* Second on team with seven multi-RBI games, plus 11 multi-hit efforts

* Excellent baserunner who was 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	.278	26/18	54	16	15	1-2-2	12	26/.481	11	6	11	0	.444	1	0	0-1	1 (.973)

* Second on team in on-base pct. (.444) and hit-by-pitch (6), 4th in 2-out batting (.333), 5th in slugging pct. (.481) and pct. of runners advanced (.543).

* Has totaled just two hits in team's last 12 games (14 ABs), after batting 5-for-10 in previous three-game stretch

* Owns four multi-hit and two multi-RBI games

* Sparked ND offense in first three games of 2003 vs. Dayton, Newman and ASU (6-for-11, 2 RBI, 7 RBI, HR, 3B, 2B)

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	.309	32/24	97	20	30	5-2-0	12	39/.402	12	2	21	2	.396	0	0	8-11	1.000

* Third on team in stolen bases (8), 4th in batting avg. (.309), 2-out RBI (9) and leadoff on-base pct. (.429), 5th in overall on-base pct. (.396) and walks (12).

* Did not play in Pittsburgh doubleheader, after batting 1-for-8 in midweek vs. CMU and EMU

* 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	.268	29/24	82	13	22	1-0-0	18	23/.280	3	3	12	5	.311	2	3	1-2	4 (.930)

* Effective situational hitter who has 18 RBI (despite totaling just 22 hits), also leading team in pct. of runners advanced (.632) and 5th in sac. bunts (3)

* Looking to snap out of 2-for-17 slump in last six games

* Owns six multi-hit and four multi-RBI games

or Joe Thaman (Jr., 1B; St. Louis, MO)

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'01	.284	61/60	208	29	59	15-1-2	25	82/.394	10	2	31	0	.318	3	3	1-3	6 (.990)
'02	.272	62/58	180	43	49	6-0-6	33	73/.406	24	5	40	3	.370	2	13	2-5	9 (.984)
'03	.197	28/18	71	5	14	4-1-0	14	20/.282	4	1	22	2	.250	0	5	0-0	1 (.996)
Tot.	.266	151/136	459	77	122	25-2-8	72	175/.381	38	8	93	5	.329	5	21	3-8	16 (.988)

* Second on team in sac. bunts (5), 5th in 2-out batting (.318)

* A .191 career batter vs. SHU ((4-for-21), 2 R, BB, 5 Ks, 0-1 SB

* Hit 2-for-4 with pair of 2-run, bases-loaded singles in second game at St. John's, ending 1-for-22 slump

* Hit game-winning single to beat Wake Forest in 13-inning battle (2-1)

* Owns four multi-hit and three multi-RBI games in 2003

* Rated BIG EAST's top defensive 1B in 2002 and '03 (per *Baseball America*)

DEFENSIVE-MINDED – Notre Dame's .970 season fielding pct. remains on team-record pace, with the Irish totaling just 43 errors in 37 games (1.2 Es per game) ... ND has posted 13 error-free games, 12 one-error games and just six games with three-plus Es ... prior to making two errors in both games of the Pittsburgh doubleheader, the Irish had totaled just three Es in the previous five games ... the current eight starting position players have combined to make less than one error per game (32 in 37 GP), with two of freshman RF Cody Rizzo's errors coming as the backup catcher (sophomore Matt Edwards has made two of his four Es at his new position of 1B) ... unearned runs have provided the margin of defeat for the Irish just once this season, in the 14-8 loss to Arizona State (6 UER).

HR BINGES – Notre Dame launched six home runs in the season-opening trip to Arizona State (4 total GP, vs. Dayton, Newman and ASU twice) but then totaled just two HRs in the next 19 games (not counting a Steve Sollmann inside-the-park variety) ... the home run drought ended in a three-game stretch with multiple HRs vs. Valparaiso (2) and in both games at St. John's (3 and 2), with the Irish then totaling just four HRs in the last nine games ... the ND pitchers gave up home runs in four straight early-season games (six total in that stretch) but then surrendered just six HRs in the next 24 games – with eight more opponent homers in the last eight games.

WHAT A RELIEF – Here's a look at some of Notre Dame's top bullpen pitchers' game-by-game stats (Doherty started vs. Toledo and Thornton's numbers include starts vs. Navy/gm 2, Detroit, Bowling Green and Pittsburgh) ... numbers indicate **IP-H-R-ER-BB-K**:

	Doherty	Jones	Laird	Gagne	Thornton	Viloria
Day	0.2-4-5-5-2-0			1.0-1-0-0-0-1		1.1-0-0-0-0-0
New						
ASU			1-2-4-4-4-2			
ASU				0.2-6-9-4-3-0	2.1-3-1-1-1-0	1.1-0-0-0-0-0
NEB	0.2-0-0-0-2-2				4.0-3-1-0-1-1	
MINN						
WFU				6.0-4-0-0-1-2		
VAN				2.0-0-0-0-0-4		
Navy			1.0-0-0-0-1-1		1.0-0-0-0-2-0	2.0-0-0-0-0-1
UNF				2.0-2-0-0-0-1		
Jack.				0.2-2-3-3-1-0	1.0-1-0-0-0-1	
EIU		0.2-0-0-0-1-1		0.1-0-0-0-0-1		
Navy	2.0-2-0-0-0-4	3.0-5-2-2-0-5			4.0-3-0-0-0-0	
Cr.			1.0-1-1-1-1-1			1.0-1-0-0-0-1
Vill				5.1-6-1-1-2-4		
Vill						2.0-3-1-0-0-2
Vill		1.0-1-0-0-0-0				
Tol	4.0-2-2-0-1-7		1.0-1-0-0-0-2			
Pur		1.0-1-2-1-1-1	1.0-0-0-0-2-1	1.0-0-0-0-0-1	5.0-5-3-1-0-2	1.0-1-0-0-0-1
GU						1.0-1-0-0-0-1
GU			1.0-3-3-3-2-1	1.0-1-0-0-0-3		
Det					5.0-5-1-1-0-4	
Val		1.0-0-0-0-0-1	1.0-0-0-0-0-2	1.0-2-1-1-0-1		
SJU			1.0-0-0-0-0-2			
SJU				2.0-0-0-0-0-0		
WMU				2.0-1-0-0-0-4		
ChSt	2.0-0-0-0-1-3	2.0-0-0-0-0-4				
BG				1.1-0-0-0-2-1	5.0-3-2-1-2-2	0.2-1-0-0-0-2
Cr.				2.1-1-0-0-1-1		0.2-1-0-0-0-1
Cr.		0.0-1-0-0-0-0	3.1-3-3-3-0-6	1.1-1-1-1-0-0		
CMU					0.2-0-0-0-2-2	1.1-2-1-1-0-0
EMU	2.0-0-0-0-0-5		1.0-0-0-0-0			
Pitt						
Pitt			1.0-0-0-0-1	2.2-5-2-2-2-0	5.1-9-3-3-0-3	
SHU				1.0-0-0-0-0-2		
SHU	2.0-2-1-0-0-2					1.0-0-0-0-0-1

Relief Wins and Saves

Gagne – wins vs. Wake Forest, Vanderbilt and Bowling Green; saves vs. Dayton, North Florida, Eastern Illinois, Purdue, Western Michigan, Creighton (gms 2 and 3) and Seton Hall (gm 1)

Viloria – win vs. Dayton; save vs. Villanova (gm 1)

Jones – wins vs. Purdue and Chicago State

Laird – win at Creighton (gm 3)

Inside The Notre Dame Bullpen (stats for relief appearances only)

Pitcher	ERA	W-L	Rel. GP	SV	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP	HBP	Inher.	R's Sc.	1st Batters
Arminio	0.00	0-0	2	0	2.1	0 (.000, 0)	0/0	1/1	0	0	0	0	0-for-1
Viloria	0.63	1-0	12	1	14.1	11 (.224, 0)	2/1	11/0	0	0	0-of-7	2-for-11, 4 K	
Thornton	1.12	0-0	4	0	8.0	6 (.231, 0)	2/1	3/6	0	2	1-of-3	1-for-2, K, BB, HB	
Gagne	3.21	3-3	18	8	33.2	32 (.248, 2)	17/12	26/12	2	0	1-of-7	3-for-16, 2 K, BB	
Jones	3.38	2-0	6	0	8.0	8 (.250, 0)	4/3	11/1	0	0	0	1-for-6, K	
Ogilvie	4.50	0-0	1	0	2.0	2 (.250, 0)	1/1	2/0	0	0	0	0-for-1	
Doherty	4.82	0-0	6	0	9.1	8 (.242, 0)	6/5	16/5	1	1	0-of-1	1-for-5, 2 K, BB	
Laird	7.07	1-0	12	0	14.0	10 (.196, 3)	11/11	20/11	3	1	1-of-1	1-for-10, 5 K, 2 BB	
Vergara	7.36	0-0	5	0	11.0	11 (.250, 2)	11/9	8/9	2	3	0	0-for-5, 3 K	
Kalita	8.10	0-0	1	0	3.1	6 (.545, 0)	3/3	0/3	0	1	0	BB	
Wilkins	9.00	0-0	3	0	4.0	10 (.500, 1)	6/4	5/1	0	0	0	1-for-3, K	
Bickford	18.00	0-0	1	0	2.0	4 (.364, 0)	4/4	2/3	1	0	0	0-for-1, K	
Totals	4.34	7-3	71	9	112.0	108 (.255, 8)	67/54	105/52	9	8	3-of-19	10-for-61 (.164) 6 BB, 21 K	

BULLPEN BOUNCES BACK – The Notre Dame relief pitchers had some rocky outings in the first few weeks of the season but have lowered the bullpen ERA to 4.50 in recent weeks ... the bullpen has allowed just 3-of-19 inherited runners to score (including one in the 5-3 loss to Pittsburgh) while the first batters facing the ND relievers have combined to hit just .164 (10-for-61) with six walks and 20 Ks.

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 April 17):

Matt Bok, C (Ogden Raptors, Dodgers single-A, Pioneer League) ... yet to play a game in '03

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)256, 11-for-43, 13 GP, 3B, 2B, 4 R, 2 RBI, 8 BB, 7 Ks, has made just one error while splitting time at SS and 3B (.967 fielding pct.)

Aaron Heilman, RHP (Norfolk Tides, Mets AAA, International League)
3-0, 1.80 ERA, 3 GS, 20 IP, .200 opp. batting avg. (14-for-70), 4 R, HR, 5 BB, 17 Ks

Tim Kalita, LHP (Erie Sea Wolves, Tigers AA, Eastern League)
7.11 ERA, 4 GP, 6.1 IP, .345 opp. avg. (10-for-29), 5 R, BB, 4 Ks

Brad Lidge, RHP (Houston Astros) ... 2-0, 0.82 ERA, 8 GP, 12.2 IP, 9 H, 4 R/3 ER, HR, 5 BB, 5 Ks

Chris Michalak, LHP (Colorado Springs Sky Sox, Rockies AAA, Pacific Coast League) ... 2-1, 3.06 ERA, 3 GS, 17.2 IP, .294 opp.avg. (20-for-68), 6 R/3 ER, 10 BB, 13 Ks ... also has hit 2-for-6 (R, 2 RBI)

Paul O'Toole, C/IF/OF (Daytona Cubs, Cubs single-A, Florida State League)
4-for-10, 4 GP, R, 2B, 2 RBI, 3 BB, K

Christian Parker, RHP (Columbus Clippers, Yankees AAA, International League) ... yet to pitch in '03

Steve Stanley, OF (Midland Rockhounds, Athletics AA, Texas League)
.262 (11-for-42), 11 GP, 5 R, 7 RBI, SAC, 3 BB, 4 Ks, E

Brian Stavisky, OF (Kane County Cougars, Oakland single-A, Midwest League)
.319 (15-for-47), 13 GP, 11 R, 7 RBI, 3B, 4 2B, SAC, 2 HBP, 9 BB, 11 Ks, E

Danny Tamayo, RHP (Wichita Wranglers, Royals AA, Texas League)
0-2, 2.89 ERA, 2GS, 9.1 IP, .324 opp. avg. (11-for-34), 5 R/3 ER, 5 BB, 3 Ks

Brant Ust, IF (Erie Sea Wolves, Tigers AA, Eastern League)
.143 (4-for-28), 8 GP, 3 R, 3 RBI, 4 2B, BB, 9 Ks, SB, starts at SS (5) and 2B (3)

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 **34-3 in its last 37 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 233-51 in the facility (.820) ... ND had defeated 21 consecutive non-conference teams that visited The Eck before last week's loss to Eastern Michigan.

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 **715-429-1 career record** (.624) includes 180-121 at St. Thomas ('83-'88), 152-158 at Air Force ('89-'94) and 383-150-1 (.718) at ND ('95-'03) ... 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 (Mideast), 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, 129-43) ... in 68 BIG EAST series spanning eight seasons, the Irish have won 53 with eight splits and just seven series wins by the opponent (just two of them being 3-game sweeps) ... the Irish have been swept just four times in 66 all-time BIG EAST doubleheaders (40 ND sweeps, 22 splits).

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 big innings have included three 9-run eruptions (vs. ASU, Georgetown and Detroit) and 6-run innings vs. Newman and St. John's ... the **2nd inning has produced four “big innings”**, with four also in the 6th, two in the 3rd and one each in the 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th – with the Irish failing to post 5-plus runs in only the 1st and 9th innings this season (ND has totaled just 13 first-inning runs all 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 ... here's a look at ND's big innings in 2003:

Gm #	Opponent	Big Inning	Final Score
1	Dayton	5 runs in the 7th	W, 10-9
2	Newman	6 runs in the 3rd	W, 15-5
4	Arizona State (gm 2)	9 runs in the 6th	L, 8-14
21	Georgetown (gm 2)	9 runs in the 6th	W, 13-3
23	Detroit	9 runs in the 2nd	W, 15-5
24	Valparaiso	5 runs in the 2nd	W, 13-4
24	Valparaiso	5 runs in the 5th	
25	St. John's (gm 1)	6 runs in the 3rd	W, 11-3
26	St. John's (gm 2)	5 runs in the 2nd	W, 18-3
26	St. John's (gm 2)	5 runs in the 4th	
27	Western Michigan	5 runs in the 8th	W, 7-1
28	Chicago State	8 runs in the 2nd	W, 9-3
29	Bowling Green	5 runs in the 6th	W, 7-2
37	Seton Hall	5 runs in the 6th	W, 9-3

MIDSEASON CHECKUP *(pre-Seton Hall)*

With 35 games in the books, here's a look at how Notre Dame has answered 10 major preseason questions:

Who would emerge as the new leadoff hitter, at a spot held the previous four seasons mostly by Steve Stanley (and fellow 2002 grads Ken Meyer and Paul O'Toole)?

Sophomore SS Matt Macri and freshman OF Cody Rizzo were tried at the leadoff spot in the first seven games before ND moved junior 2B Steve Sollmann up from the 2-hole into the top spot ... Sollmann has responded by batting .386 as the leadoff hitter (44-for-114, 35 R, 25 RBI, 3 HR, 3 3B, 7 2B, 12 BB, 17 SB) and reaching base in 54 percent of his leadoff plate appearances (any inning) since the lineup shift (he leads the team with a .564 overall leadoff OB pct.).

Who would fill the gap in center field, where Stanley started all 254 games from 1999-2002?

Freshmen Craig Cooper and Cody Rizzo were tried in center during the first two weeks of the season before their classmate Brennan Grogan settled in at the position, starting 21 of the next 22 games at CF ... another freshman, Alex Nettey, then started three games at CF while senior Kris Billmaier (the starter at RF) now appears to be the choice in center after starting the last three games in Eck Stadium's spacious CF.

Who would step into the No. 3 spot in the batting order, occupied in 2002 by LF Brian Stavisky (who signed as a junior 6th-round pick of the Oakland A's)?

Junior corner IF Matt Edwards has made 27 starts in the 3-hole while ranking as one of the team's most pivotal players in 2003 ... Edwards – who missed most of the '02 season with a broken leg – is batting .357 with 41 RBI and 6 home runs in 31 games played, with those numbers comparable to Stavisky's 2002 production (.394, 57 RBI, 9 HR in 50 GP).

How would sophomores Matt Macri (SS) and Matt Edwards (3B/1B) return from their respective injuries that held them out for most of the 2002 season:

Edwards (see note above) has been arguably the key factor to ND's first-half success (with Steve Sollmann's production again meeting his usual high standard) while Macri – who missed most of '02 with ACL elbow surgery – has overcome a slow start by hitting .359 and making just five errors in the last 20 games (he made four Es in the first four games and was batting just .211 in late March, now .294 overall) ... Macri also has showcased his arm strength to throw out several batters

Who would meet the challenge as the staff's No. 3 starter, after the preseason surgery to ace Grant Johnson?

Ryan Kalita has stepped up as the No. 3 starter in the past few weeks, helping overcome the loss of both Johnson and Kalita's fellow senior RHP Peter Ogilvie (who just returned after missing a month due to a sore shoulder) ... Kalita (11-0 in his ND career) is 4-0 with a 3.89 ERA and .240 opp. batting avg. this season (29 Ks, 20 BB, 35 H in 39.1 IP).

Would the Irish experience a dropoff in power, after the loss of O'Toole (11 HRs in '02) and Stavisky (9)?

The 2003 team's current home run total (20) actually is on a par with the 35-game HR total by the '02 squad (24) but the Irish may not have a double-digit HR hitter on the '03 squad, with Matt Edwards (6) the current long-ball leader ... ND's current 25-4 run is all the more noteworthy when considering that cleanup hitter Kris Billmaier has not homered in the last 33 games.

Would the Irish have speed and good basestealing ability, after the loss of Stanley and O'Toole?

The return of sophomore SS Matt Macri and the addition of freshmen such as Brennan Grogan, Cody Rizzo, Craig Cooper and Greg Lopez has added some quality baserunners to the 2003 lineup – with the current SB total (45) well ahead of the 2002 team's SBs (36) at the 35-game point ... the combination of junior 2B Steve Sollmann (21), Grogan (9) and Cooper (8) give the Irish three players who are close to swiping 10-plus bases (Stanley's 32 and O'Toole's 11 were ND's only double-digit SB players in '02) – but no other player on the 2003 squad has more than two SBs

How would junior Javi Sanchez handle the position switch from the middle infield to catcher?

Sanchez – a prep 2B who filled in at SS in '02 – has made an impressive transition behind the dish while doing a solid job batting in the 5-hole (.316, 22 R, 14 RBI, HR, 3B, 8 2B) ... Sanchez is looking to cut down his passed balls (12) and has made major strides in throwing out attempted basestealers, due to his strong arm and agility behind the plate.

How quickly and to what degree would the freshman position players make an impact?

Five freshman position players – DH/LF Cody Rizzo, CF Brennan Grogan, 3B Greg Lopez, DH Steve Andres and LF/DH Craig Cooper – played key roles in the first half of the 2003 season, combining to make 99 starts (after 29 games) while batting a combined .318 (114-for-358) ... their biggest first-half statistical contributions included 62% of ND's times hit-by-pitch, 50% of the team's triples, 43% of the stolen bases and 42% of the runs scored (94 of 224).

Would the offense do its share to complement the talented core of veteran pitchers?

The 2003 team (.308) – which has taken on a more righthanded slant (after the departure of five lefthanded-hitting position starters) – now is batting five points lower than the 2002 team (.313) at the 35-game point ... the most impressive number has been the team's 10 "big innings" (5-plus runs) in the last 14 games ... seven of the team's nine starting position players currently are batting above .290.

STRONG IN ALL AREAS – Notre Dame is the only team that entered the week ranked among the BIG EAST's top four in overall team batting avg. (**4th, .307**), ERA (**2nd, 3.55**) and fielding pct. (**1st, .970**) ... the only other team that entered the week ranked in the top four of all those categories is Pittsnurgh (2nd in batting, 4th in ERA and fielding).

GOOD FOR 40 – Notre Dame owns **14 straight seasons with 40-plus wins**, led by the 50-18 season in 2002, 49 wins in '01, 48 in '89 and '92, 46 in four seasons ('90, '93 '94, '00), 45 in '91 and 44 in '95 ... that's the fourth-longest active 40-win streak in Division I baseball, behind Florida State (25), Wichita State (25) and Clemson (17).

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 130-39-1 (.768)**.

BIG SHADOWS – Notre Dame's 2003 roster includes some big bodies, with eight players 6-4 or taller – led by freshman RHP **Ryan Doherty** (7-1, 230), senior 1B **Mike Holba** (6-8, 240), freshman LHP **Tom Thornton** (6-6, 205), sophomore RHPs **Grant Johnson** (6-6, 220) and **John Axford** (6-5, 180), and sophomore 1B **Joe Thaman** (6-4, 215).

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.

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 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; inj.) – 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)

RIGHT STUFF – ND's lineup – predominantly lefthanded the past four seasons – has taken on a decidedly righthanded 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.

ELITE E.R.A. – Notre Dame – which entered the week ranked 27th 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.

CLOSING WITH THE CLOSER – Current senior RHP and closer **J.P. Gagne** had some rocky moments early in the 2002 postseason but managed to post an amazing ratio of strikeouts (15) to walks (1) in 18 innings of 2002 postseason action ... 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 three-game NCAA Super-Regional series.

SENIOR SAVERS – Notre Dame's senior class includes three righthanders – **J.P. Gagne** (14), **Brandon Vioria** (6) and **Matt Laird** (5) – who each have totaled five-plus saves in their ND careers ... Laird and his 3/4 delivery produced four saves in the closing role with the 2001 team that climbed to the No. 1 national ranking ... his more noteworthy saves that season 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 ... he also went 7-2 in his final nine decisions of the 2002 season.

FAR & WIDE – The Notre Dame list of all-time baseball monogram winners includes players from 43 home states ... current senior RHP **Brandon Vioria** (Wailuku, Hawaii) in 2000 became the program's first letterwinner from the island state while current junior LHP **Cody Wilkins** (Hudson, N.C.) could become the first from the Tar Heel state ... the only other states that have not produced ND baseball letterwinners include Alaska, Idaho, Nevada, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Vermont ... the nine-year **Paul Mainieri** era has featured players from 34 states/provinces (see p. 33 of media guide), with 19 on the '03 roster: California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Ontario, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington.

TEAM GAME HIGHS (pre-SHU)

At-Bats: 47 vs. Villanova (3/23)	Runs Scored: 18 vs. St. John's (4/6)
Hits: 18 vs. Dayton (2/21), St. John's (4/6) and Creighton (4/13)	
RBI: 17 vs. St. John's (4/6)	Doubles: 8 vs. Creighton (4/13)
Triples: 2 (6 games)	Home Runs: 3 vs. St. John's (4/6)
Total Bases: 31 vs. Creighton (4/13)	Walks: 8 vs. Georgetown (3/29)
Batters Strikeouts: 13 vs. Wake Forest (3/2)	Sac. Bunts: 3 vs. Villanova (3/23 and 3/24)
Stolen Bases: 4 vs. Wake Forest (3/2), Georgetown (3/29) and Bowling Green (4/10)	
Caught Stealing: 2 vs. Navy (3/14) and Bowling Green (4/10)	Runners LOB: 15 vs. Villanova (3/23)
Hit-By-Pitch: 4 vs. Newman (2/22)	Runners LOB: 15 vs. Villanova (3/23)
Hit into DP: 3 vs. North Florida (3/11), Eastern Illinois (3/13) and Detroit (4/1)	
Errors: 4 vs. Eastern Illinois (3/13)	Passed Balls: 3 vs. Georgetown (3/30)
DPs Turned: 3 vs. Minnesota (3/1)	
Strikeouts Thrown: 16 vs. Western Michigan (4/9)	
Fewest Hits Allowed: 2 vs. Eastern Illinois (3/13) and Chicago State (4/10)	
Wild Pitches: 4 vs. Arizona State (2/22)	Hit Batters: 2 (4 games)

INDIVIDUAL GAME HIGHS (pre-SHU)

Hits: 4 by Sollmann vs. Georgetown (3/29), Edwards vs. St. John's (4/6) and Creighton (4/13), Brennan Grogan vs. Creighton (4/13)	
RBI: 6 by Kris Billmaier vs. Newman (2/22)	Walks: 3 by Steve Andres vs. St. John's (4/6)
Home Runs: 2 by Kris Billmaier vs. Newman (2/22)	Doubles: 3 by Kris Billmaier vs. Georgetown (3/29)
Runs Scored: 4 by Javi Sanchez vs. Purdue (3/26), Steve Sollmann vs. Georgetown (3/29), Matt Edwards vs. St. John's (4/6)	
At-Bats: 7 by Brennan Grogan vs. Villanova (3/23)	
Total bases: 9 by Kris Billmaier vs. Newman (2/22) and Matt Edwards vs. St. John's (4/6)	
Sac hits: 2 by Joe Thaman vs. Villanova (3/23), Greg Lopez vs. Villanova (3/24) and Brennan Grogan vs. Creighton (4/12)	
Stolen bases: 3 by Steve Sollmann vs. Georgetown (3/29)	
Hit by pitch: 2 by Cody Rizzo vs. Newman (2/22) and Detroit (4/1), Craig Cooper vs. Villanova (3/24)	
Fielding Assists: 7 by Matt Macri vs. Wake Forest (3/2)	
Innings pitched: 8.0 by Chris Niesel vs. Vanderbilt (3/8) and Eastern Illinois (3/13), Ryan Kalita vs. Villanova (3/24)	
Strikeouts: 12 by John Axford vs. Western Michigan (Apr 09, 2003)	

2003 Notre Dame Baseball Results

Date	Opponent	Result	ND Line	Opp. Line	Pitcher of Record	Notes
2/21	vs. Dayton	W 10-9	10-18-1	9-11-3	Viloria	
2/22	vs. Newman (7)	W 15-5	15-17-1	5-12 -2	Axford	
2/22	at Arizona State	L 3-16	3-6-3	16-10-3	Ogilvie	
2/23	at Arizona State	L 8-14	8-13-3	14-13-1	Gagne	
2/28	vs. Nebraska	L 1-7	1-6-1	7-12-2	Niesel	
3/1	at Minnesota	L 2-8	2-6-0	8-12-2	Ogilvie	
3/2	vs. Wake Forest (13)	W 2-1	2-11-0	1-8-2	Gagne	
3/8	vs. Vanderbilt (10)	W 3-1	3-7-3	1-3-2	Gagne	
3/10	vs. Navy	W 7-3	7-11-0	3-6-2	Axford	
3/11	at North Florida	W 6-1	6-11-0	1-5-7	Kalita	
3/12	at Jacksonville (10)	L 6-9	6-10-0	9-14-6	Gagne	
3/13	vs. Eastern Illinois	W 3-2	3-9-4	2-2-0	Niesel	
3/14	vs. Navy	W 11-2	11-16-1	2-10-4	Thornton	
3/15	vs. Creighton	W 10-3	10-14-1	3-7-2	Axford	
3/23	at Villanova (13)	L 2-3	2-10-0	3-11-3	Gagne	
3/23	at Villanova (7)	W 3-2	3-7-2	2-5-1	Axford	
3/24	at Villanova	W 5-1	5-7-1	1-6-3	Kalita	
3/25	Toledo	W 8-3	8-11-1	3-7-1	Doherty	
3/26	Purdue	W 8-5	8-9-3	5-7-4	Jones	
3/29	Georgetown (7)	W 6-2	6-12-0	2-6-2	Niesel	
3/29	Georgetown	W 13-3	13-11-2	3-7-3	Axford	
3/30	Georgetown	W 12-5	12-14-3	5-7-0	Kalita	
4/1	Detroit	W 15-5	15-17-1	5-9-3	Thornton	
4/2	Valparaiso	W 13-4	13-15-1	4-9-0	Vergara	
4/6	at St. John's (7)	W 11-3	11-7-0	3-9-0	Niesel	
4/6	at St. John's	W 18-3	18-18-2	3-6-2	Kalita	
4/9	Western Michigan	W 7-1	7-8-0	1-7-2	Axford	
4/10	Chicago State (7)	W 9-3	9-11-2	3-2-2	Jones	
4/10	Bowling Green (7)	W 7-2	7-8-1	2-4-3	Gagne	
4/12	at Creighton	W 2-1	2-7-0	1-6-3	Niesel	
4/13	at Creighton	W 13-12	13-18-1	12-14-2	Laird	
4/14	Central Michigan	W 8-3	8-11-0	3-7-1	Axford	
4/15	Eastern Michigan	L 3-5	3-6-0	5-7-2	Jones	
4/17	Pittsburgh (7)	W 5-2	5-8-2	2-8-0	Niesel (7.0)	
4/17	Pittsburgh	L 3-5	3-4-2	5-14-3	Thornton	
4/19	Seton Hall	W 4-3			Kalita	
4/19	Seton Hall	W 9-3			Axford	

Notre Dame Inning-By-Inning

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	EX	Total
Notre Dame	15	51	42	30	34	45	20	24	7	3	271
Opponents	17	8	29	10	14	27	31	16	4	4	160

EVEN STEVEN – Notre Dame's scoring dominance in the 2nd inning this season (51-8) has nearly been matched by the team's scoring edge two innings later in the 4th (30-10) ... the Irish own a scoring edge in every inning but the 1st (15-17) and the 7th (20-31).

WINNING BIG & SMALL – Notre Dame is 7-1 this season in one-run games while already posting 16 "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.

APRIL SHOWERS OF WINS – Notre Dame has dominated in April during the nine-year Paul Mainieri era (**172-38**, .820), including **52-6** (.897) in April during the past three seasons (20-2 in '01, 19-2 in '02, 13-2 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 and Pittsburgh in '03.