

# FALL OF THE MIGHTY

*Boston College won 41-39 with a last-second field goal, ending Notre Dame's dream of an undefeated season*

by Warren Junium

November 20, Notre Dame —

Notre Dame Stadium stood empty. The events of this hallowed ground are over, but the memories will remain with every person who witnessed this incredible football game. This day the Notre Dame dream season was shattered by an upstart football team from Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, that came to South Bend for revenge. The Boston College Eagles got their wish and left the stadium on a wave of jubilation after trouncing a previously unbeaten Fighting Irish team.

"This is a big game. We knew they were number one. We tried to forget last year, but it's hard to do. Last year, we didn't come to play. This year, we thought we could win," said Boston College junior linebacker Stephen Boyd.

The Irish were in trouble from the start of the game. The Eagles received from fifth-year senior kicker Kevin Pendergast and fumbled twice on the return, but Notre Dame could not capitalize on the turnover. Boston College moved the ball well against the Irish defense in its first drive. Notre Dame stopped the Eagles on a fourth and six play when sophomore cornerback Bobby Taylor tackled freshman back Mark Hartsell to prevent him from gaining the first down. The Irish took over the ball on their own 46.

Freshman tailback Randy Kinder led the

first Irish drive with three carries and set up the Irish for a field goal attempt, but disaster struck. On the field goal attempt, the Eagles broke through the line, blocked the kick and Stephen Boyd returned the ball to the Irish 15 before he was surrounded by Notre Dame

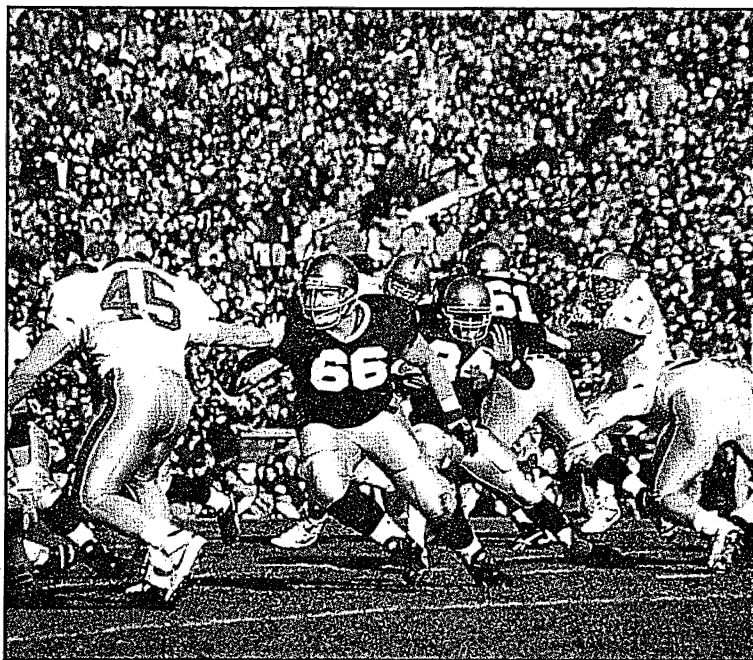
Lake Dawson. The Irish offense folded when McDougal fumbled as he was sacked and Boston College took over the ball on its own 30 yard line.

Senior quarterback Glenn Foley showed the Irish fans that the Boston College passing game would not be

stopped by the highly touted Notre Dame defense. He was five-for-eight in passing completions and threw two bombs that broke the Irish pass defense. The first was from the Irish 49 yard line, when Foley connected with junior split end Clarence Cannon, and on a dump to senior flanker Keith Miller in the middle, which set up the Eagles first touchdown. With 3:37 remaining in the first quarter, Foley drilled the ball over the middle to senior flanker Ivan Boyd in the end zone for a touchdown and 10-0 Eagles lead.

The Irish were not going to let the Eagles run away with game. McDougal and his offense started out with the ball early in the second quarter

and went with the air attack. On his first toss, McDougal hit senior split end Clint Johnson with a streaking pass for a gain of 15 yards. McDougal also hit sophomore split end Derrick Mayes with a big gainer. The big play of this drive, though, was a double fake by McDougal. He aired the ball out for a 29 yard pass to junior fullback Ray Zellars that put him in the end zone for Notre Dame's first score of the afternoon, bringing the Irish to within three of the Eagles.



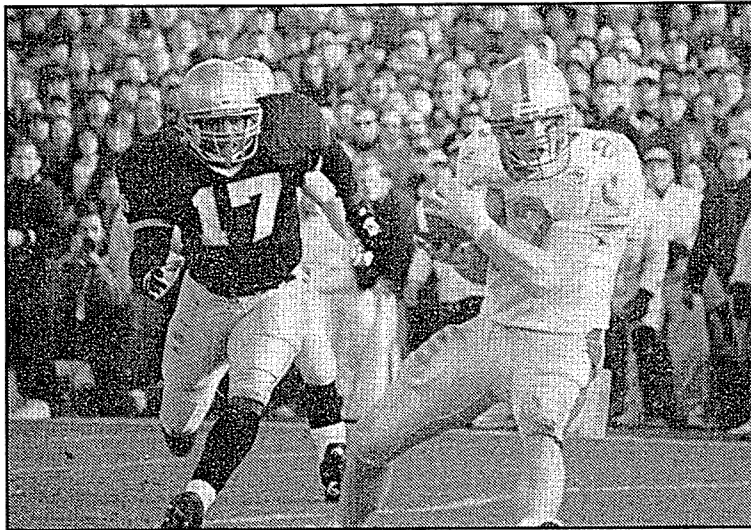
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Senior outside tackle Todd Norman holds off a Boston College defender to clear the path of junior fullback Ray Zellars, who had 80 yards against the Eagles.

defenders.

Boston College took over the ball at the Irish 15. It appeared the Eagles would waltz into the end zone, but the Irish defense stood strong and forced Boston College to settle for the field goal by the unexpected hero of the game, senior kicker David Gordon. This put the Eagles up, 3-0.

Irish possessions opened up with a 20 yard pass by senior quarterback Kevin McDougal to Notre Dame senior flanker



Brent Tadsen

Sophomore free safety Brian Magee closes in on junior tight end Pete Mitchell. Mitchell received 13 passes totaling 132 yards against the Irish.

Boston College's next possession illustrated the control and caliber of the offense. "They had great execution. They have a great offense, and Glenn Foley is one of the best quarterbacks in the nation," said Notre Dame senior safety Jeff Burris. Foley proved that he can pass with the best and also intimidate one of the best defenses in the country. On a tailback to quarterback pitch, Foley was surrounded by Irish tacklers, but, with some intimidation on his part, he was able to stop them short and air out a 16 yard pass to junior tight end Pete Mitchell. Foley then showed his passing prowess with a 36 yard pass to Ivan Boyd deep in the end zone for the Eagles touchdown and a 17-7 lead.

Notre Dame continued the scoring trade-off on its next drive. The drive was marred by ineffective passing, but a bright spot came when junior tailback Lee Becton carried the ball. He had two crucial carries but the team received a 15 yard penalty. A pitch from McDougal ended with a gain of 12 yards. Even with the stuttering offense, the Irish did put the ball in the end zone, bringing them back within three of Boston College.

The Eagles continued to soar as they ended the half with a one man rushing show. Darnell Campbell, Boston College's senior fullback, led this drive

with six carries that added to his fourth consecutive 100 yard rushing day. Boston College went into the locker room at the half up by 13 on Foley's loop pass to Mitchell for the touchdown.

Notre Dame was not able to gain control as the Irish offense, in for three downs and out, gave

the ball back to the Eagles once again. This time, though, Boston College didn't have far to score another touchdown. The Boston College offense ran through the faltering Irish defense to score for a 31-14 advantage.

On the kickoff Boston College surprised the Irish with an onside kick that slipped into the Eagles talons on the Irish 48. The Irish stopped Boston College short of the end

zone, and Gordon missed the field goal, wide left.

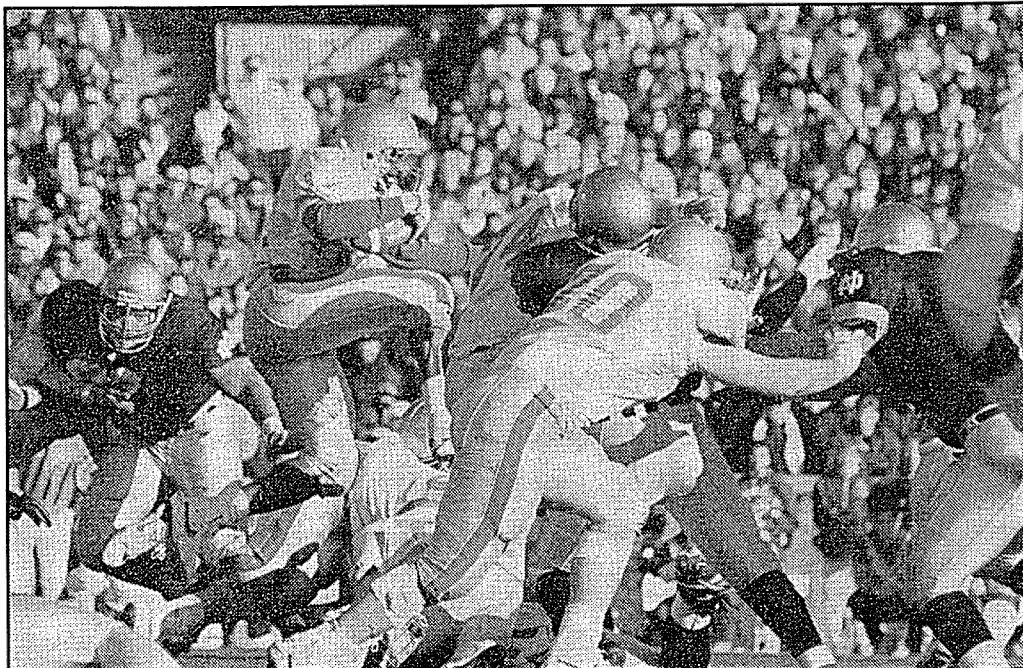
The Irish took over the ball on their own 23. McDougal relied on Mayes to keep this drive going. Mayes had three receptions over 16 yards in this drive, but the Irish could not cash in on Mayes' receptions, so they had to settle on a field goal that brought them within two touchdowns of the Eagles.

To open the fourth quarter, Boston College further hurt Notre Dame by scoring another touchdown. On a play-action fake, Foley threw to a wide open Mitchell in the right corner of the end zone for the touchdown, giving the Eagles a 38-17 lead. Could the Irish come back from this deficit?

With 10:59 remaining in the game, Notre Dame took over the ball on its own 43, and McDougal immediately went to the air attack. He connected with Mayes for a 22 yard gain, and this set up a run by Becton. On a slant right, Becton broke free from two Boston College tacklers and ran 29 yards for the Irish touchdown. Notre Dame Head Coach Lou Holtz gave the nod for the two-point conversion attempt. Becton took the ball in for two, bringing the Irish to within 13.

On Boston College's next possession, Foley fumbled the snap from the center deep

The Irish defense had a difficult time stopping the powerful Eagles' offense, which accumulated 477 total yards.



Brent Tadsen

in Eagle territory, and senior tackle Jim Flanagan recovered the ball, giving the Irish the chance to score again. They did so with a mix of rushing and passing. This time, Zellars graced the end zone for the Irish, bring them within six with 3:55 remaining.

Intense defense shut down the previously unstoppable Boston College offense, and this forced them to punt with 2:51 remaining in the game.

Notre Dame opened what appeared to be the final drive of the game with one of the most spectacular receptions of the year. On a play-action fake, McDougal threw deep down the middle for Mayes, who was blanketed by Boston College defenders, but he made the catch landing flat on his back at the Eagles 20 yard line.

With 2:27 remaining in the game Notre Dame had four opportunities to reach the end zone, but the first three fell short of their goal. On fourth and four after a play-action fake, McDougal passed to the very back of the end zone. Dawson reached out and grabbed the ball, taking the Irish to their first

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**— Tom Coughlin**

lead of the game, 39-38.

“We didn’t quit, and that’s why I’m glad to be on a team like this. Once we scored, I thought we had it, but I did realize that there was a minute left, and Foley had been doing a great job,” said McDougal.

But the game was not over. With 1:01 remaining on the clock after the kickoff, the Eagles took over on their own 25. Foley ran

the offense that worked well for him throughout the day: the pass. On the second play of the drive, Foley let a rocket go, right at Notre Dame senior defenders Pete Bercich and Jeff Burris, but it squeaked through their fingertips and fell to the turf. Foley returned the pass, setting up a final field goal for the Eagles.

“I knew that I could make the kick, and I did — all that mattered was that it went through [the uprights],” said Gordon. The Irish football season ended, 41-39.

“It was a great college football game, with lots of excitement. All we ask for is effort and we got it. I’m very happy, but humble,” said Boston College Head Coach Tom Coughlin after the game.

“I am very proud of our team. This was one of the great comebacks that I have been associated with. Our players hung in there,” said coach Holtz. “To be down so far and then come back and then for them [Boston College] to come down and kick a field goal, it’s heart-breaking.” □

## GAME SUMMARY

### Scoring Summary

|                | 1  | 2  | 3 | 4  | Final |
|----------------|----|----|---|----|-------|
| Notre Dame     | 0  | 14 | 3 | 22 | 39    |
| Boston College | 10 | 14 | 7 | 10 | 41    |

1st Quarter BC: Gordon 28 FG at 8:02  
BC: Boyd 4 pass from Foley (Gordon PAT) at 3:37

2nd Quarter ND: Zellars 39 pass from McDougal (Pendergast PAT) at 11:58  
BC: Boyd 36 pass from Foley (Gordon PAT) at 10:26  
ND: Burris 1 run (Pendergast PAT) at 5:52  
BC: Mitchell 3 pass from Foley (Gordon PAT) at 0:21

3rd Quarter BC: Campbell 21 run (Gordon PAT) at 11:24  
ND: Pendergast 29 FG at 3:20

4th Quarter BC: Mitchell 1 pass from Foley (Gordon PAT) at 11:13  
ND: Becton 29 run (2 pt. conversion McDougal) at 10:12  
ND: Zellars 4 run (Pendergast PAT) at 4:02  
ND: Dawson 4 pass from McDougal (Pendergast PAT) at 1:09  
BC: Gordon 41 FG at 0:00

### Team Statistics

|                            | ND     | BC     |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| First Downs .....          | 22     | 28     |
| Rushing .....              | 11     | 9      |
| Passing .....              | 10     | 17     |
| Penalty .....              | 1      | 2      |
| Rushing .....              | 166    | 162    |
| Passing .....              | 261    | 315    |
| Total Net Yards.....       | 69     | 87     |
| Average Gain Per Play..... | 6.2    | 5.5    |
| Fumbles-Lost.....          | 0-0    | 3-1    |
| Penalties-Yards .....      | 4-33   | 5-44   |
| Punts-Averages .....       | 2-30.5 | 2-45.5 |
| Kickoff Returns .....      | 57     | 84     |
| 3rd Down Conversions ..... | 3-12   | 10-18  |

### Individual Statistics

**Rushing:** ND - Becton 14-122-1, Zellars 8-41-1, Kinder 5-32, Failla 1-3, Edwards 1-2, Burris 1-1-1, Mosley 1-(-1), McDougal 9-(-34) BC - Campbell 24-115-1, Green 7-17, Ransome 1-14, Shirley 2-10, Hartsell 1-3, Foley 3-2, Comer 1-1

**Passing:** ND - McDougal 28-18-261-2-1, Failla 1-0-0-0-0 BC - Foley 48-30-315-4-0

**Receiving:** ND - Mayes 7-147, Dawson 4-37-1, Johnson 3-20, Becton 2-12, Zellars 1-39-1, McBride 1-6 BC - Mitchell 13-132-2, Camron 5-51, Boyd 3-49-2, Campbell 3-28, Miller 2-22, Comer 2-13, Gibbons 1-14, Green 1-6