

# Silencing the...

*Despite a boisterous home crowd, Notre Dame's domination in the first half carried it to a 42-20 victory over BYU*

by Brian Hiro

October 16, Provo, UT —

The Notre Dame-Brigham Young University clash in Cougar Stadium can be summed up by BYU Head Coach LaVell Edwards.

"It's the most talked about game we've had in Provo since I've been here," said Edwards. "We've had a hard time getting the fans to focus on our other games. And I don't think we've ever had ticket requests like this."

Relating one particularly interesting request, Edwards said, "I got a letter from some people who said they had Catholic friends. They said if they were able to get tickets, their friends would join the [Mormon] Church."

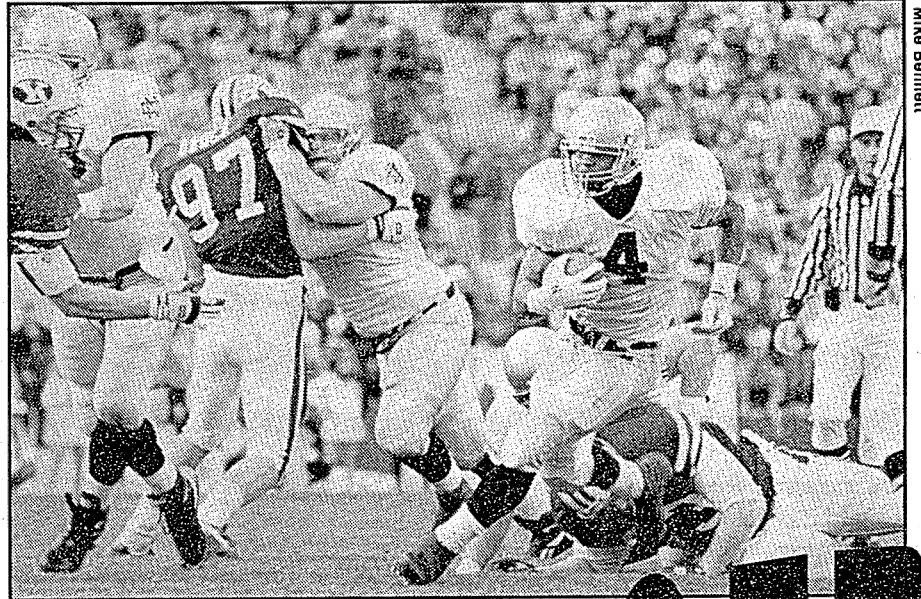
As if this excitement throughout Cougar Country wasn't enough for Lou Holtz to worry about, UCLA embarrassed BYU, 68-14, in Pasadena the previous week. Rather than devalue the match-up between Notre Dame and BYU, this loss only added to Holtz's concern.

"You don't want to play

someone that has a tradition of winning, like BYU does after they've lost," remarked Holtz. "I can't think of a worse scenario for us. We are going to get an angry Cougar."

Holtz wasn't just blowing smoke either. Last year, BYU travelled to South Bend where they were beaten 42-16 by the Irish. But the next week the Cougars returned to the friendly confines of home and dominated nationally ranked Penn State.

So entering the game with a record crowd



Mike Bennett

Junior tailback Lee Becton breaks through the BYU defensive line. He rushed 122 yards on the day.

# Cougar ROAR

of 66,247 and televised by ESPN, a primary question was how the unbeaten and third-ranked Irish would combat BYU's boisterous fans. The answer came early as a nearly flawless first half performance gave the visitors a 31-0 lead enroute to a 45-20 win over BYU.

Domination began with Notre Dame's first possession. After forcing a punt, the Irish took over in Cougar territory. Junior tailback Lee Becton ran for 11 yards on the first play of the drive. Then junior fullback Ray Zellars rumbled for 29 yards over two potential tacklers on the way to the end zone and a 7-0 lead.

The touchdown set the stage for a first half

where the experienced Irish offensive line continuously pushed back the Cougars, resulting in 175 rushing yards and a whopping 7.3 yards per carry for Notre Dame.

Meanwhile, the BYU offense couldn't even make a dent in the Irish defense, which had added an improved pass rush to its strength against the run. Two of its first three possessions ended in Notre Dame sacks, including one by senior defensive end Brian Hamilton that later sent Cougar sophomore quarterback John Walsh to the sidelines with a knee injury.

"One of our goals at the beginning of the season was to have a good pass rush," Hamilton said. "We were a good pass rushing team in the spring but it fell off for some reason in the fall. It finally came together tonight and it felt good."

Fifth-year senior kicker Kevin Pendergast wrapped up Notre Dame's second drive with a career-long 44 yard field goal. Zellars and Becton contributed runs of 18 and 13 yards, respectively, and senior quarterback Kevin McDougal hit sophomore split end Derrick Mayes on a 12 yard pass completion to put the Irish in Pendergast's range.

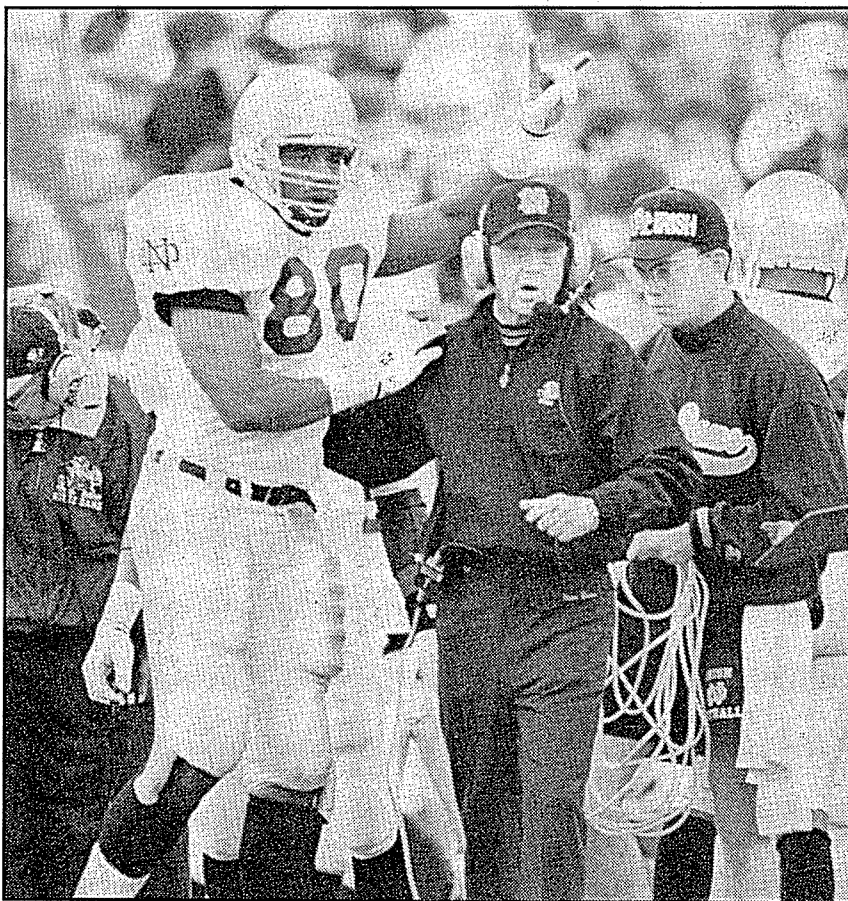
Walsh saw his last action of the day on BYU's next possession. On third down and two, Irish senior defensive tackle Jim Flanigan crashed through the line and recorded the first of his two sacks for the day. On that play, Walsh aggravated his earlier injury, forcing junior backup Tom Young into the game — a quarterback with

more than one historical tie to the university. Not only is his brother the former Cougar great and current 49er's star Steve Young, but his great-great-great grandfather was Brigham Young, the founder of the school.

The Irish defense, however, was unimpressed with Young's lineage, as evidenced

by their merciless treatment of him. He faced the onslaught of a heavy Irish pass rush and — although he did move the team better than Walsh — he wasn't able to engineer a touchdown drive until 16 seconds before the half.

**W**hile the Cougar offense stalled, Notre Dame's attack continued to rack up yards and points. Starting from the BYU 47 yard line, the Irish marched down the field on the strength of Becton's running. He had two gains of 14 yards before capping the drive off with a seven yard touchdown scramble around the left side that upped the



Mike Bennett

**"Our players expected a difficult game and we came out here very, very sharp. I can assure you, there is nothing easy about playing BYU. Nobody looks forward to playing BYU, nobody." —Lou Holtz**

advantage to 17-0. By the day's end Becton had rushed for 122 yards on 18 carries, marking the second consecutive game in which he topped 100 yards.

Just when it looked like Notre Dame was facing its first punt of the evening early in the second quarter, McDougal came up with a

big play that broke both the game wide open. Two straight incompletions put the Irish in a third and 10 situation from their own 34 yard line. But McDougal bailed them out by eluding the Cougar rush and lofting a pass to junior flanker Mike Miller, who zigzagged across the field into the end zone for a 66 yard touchdown, giving the Irish a comfortable 24-0 cushion.

"Their linebackers would drop back and sit at about 12 yards," said McDougal. "Every now and then, you have to go deep. Oh yeah, I love to throw the ball deep."

Senior free safety Jeff Burriss ended another BYU threat with an interception. The

turnover set the Irish up for their final touchdown of the half. Freshman tailback Randy Kinder and freshman fullback Marc Edwards were the stars of this drive, with Edwards eventually punching it in from five yards out, padding the lead at 31-0.

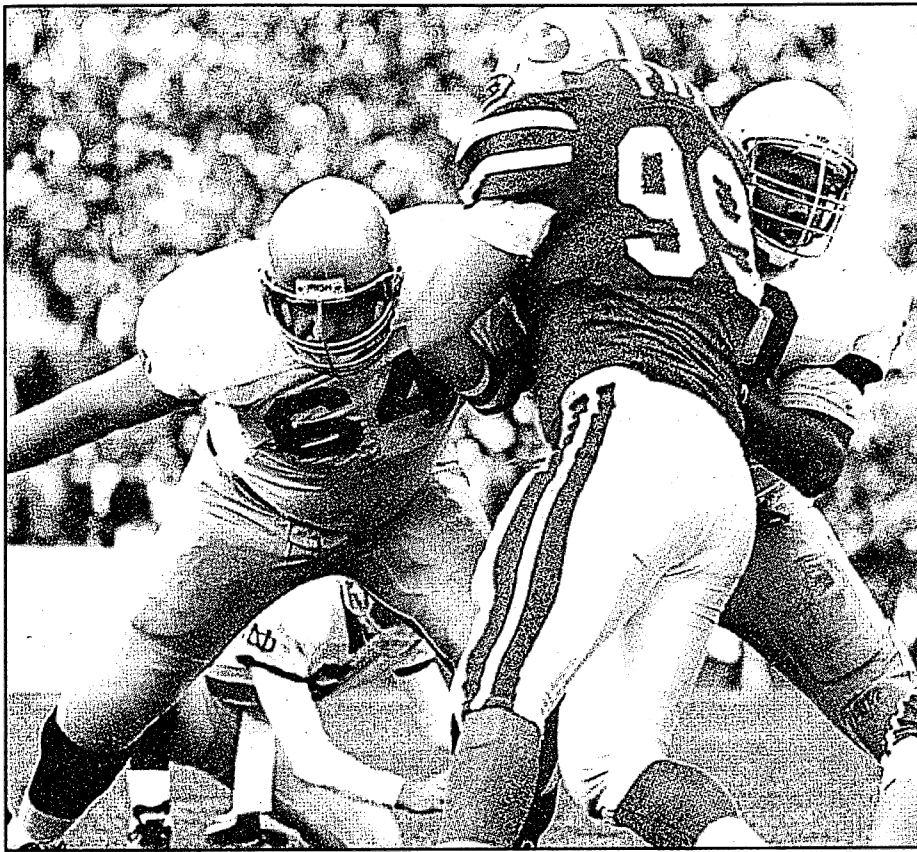
By the time the Cougars notched their first touchdown, a two yard pass from Young to senior wide receiver Eric Drage, Notre Dame was well on its way to a 7-0 record and a jump to number two in the polls. (Earlier in the day, second-ranked Alabama tied Tennessee.)

Even Holtz was impressed with the Irish performance.

"I just want to say we played very well in the first 30 minutes of the football game to take an early lead. And we took control of the football game," said Holtz.

**N**otre Dame's second half of play was different from its first. For the final two quarters, the Irish were plagued by numerous penalties and missed assignments on blitzes that gave BYU hope until the final seconds.

"It was very important that we were successful in the first half because of the way we



Mike Bennett

**Steve Misetic and Brian Hamilton, 541 pounds of Irish power, dominate the line of scrimmage. Hamilton had one sack and an impressive nine tackles on the day.**

played in the second half," said senior offensive tackle Aaron Taylor. "We were really focused in the first half and I don't know if we lost our focus or what, but we were unable to move the ball in the second half."

In all, the Irish were penalized 12 times for 103 yards, including nine for 83 in the second half. These numbers were overshadowed by BYU's 14 penalties, which prevented the chance of a Cougar comeback.

In the third quarter both teams failed to capitalize on scoring chances, BYU on a fumble in Irish territory that was recovered by Irish senior defensive tackle Bryant Young and Notre Dame on a missed 38 yard field goal by Pendergast. But the Irish finally added another touchdown to the scoreboard on a one yard plunge by Edwards, his second touchdown of the game, made with just 2:36 left in the quarter, increasing the Irish lead 38-7. The drive was highlighted by a 25 yard connection between McDougal and senior flanker Lake Dawson on fourth down with eight yards to go on the BYU 33 yard line.

The Cougars scored twice in the final

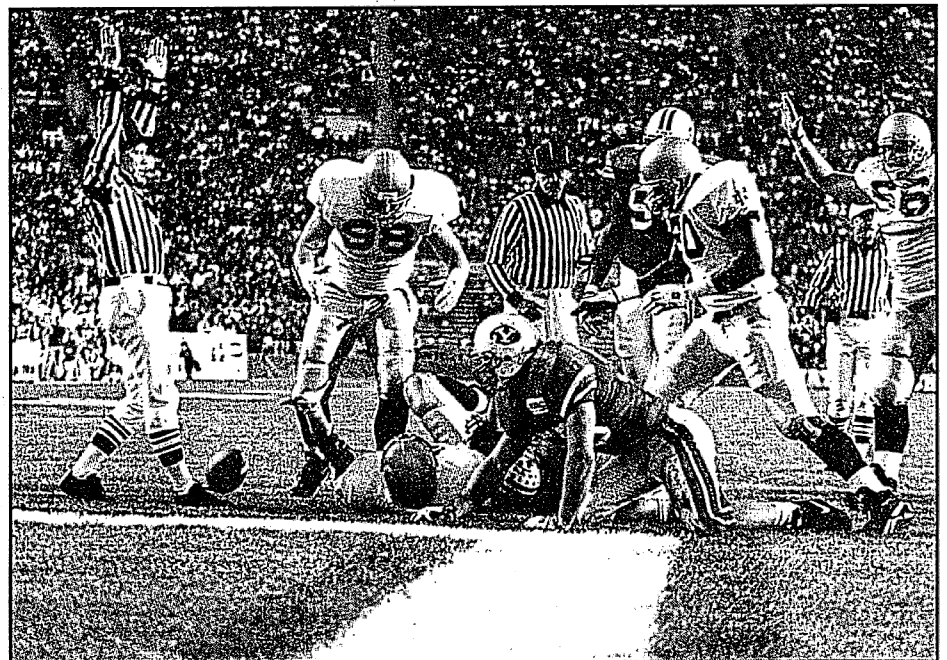
quarter to make the final score appear respectable. The first was a quarterback keeper by Young from the Notre Dame three yard line that capped a 76 yard drive, making the score 38-14. Then, after a 35 yard touchdown pass from junior backup quarterback Paul Failla to Miller that ended the Irish scoring at 45-14, Young was replaced by junior Steve Clements, BYU's third-string quarterback. He tossed a scoring pass with about a minute to go in the game, making the final score 45-20.

Holtz saluted the Cougar faithful.

"I mean this: This is the loudest, most loyal crowd I have witnessed in my entire coaching profession — the loudest and the most loyal. There were times when we tried to check off, but we just couldn't hear."

But according to Holtz the victory was not quite as convincing as it looked. "There wasn't anything easy about this contest. I've been in the coaching business for a long time and I have tremendous respect for BYU and the program they have," said Holtz. "Our players expected a difficult game, and we came out here very, very sharp. I can assure you, there is nothing easy about playing BYU. Nobody looks forward to playing BYU, nobody."

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**Marc Edwards rushes for his second touchdown of the game. BYU could not stop Notre Dame's running attack that tallied 307 yards.**