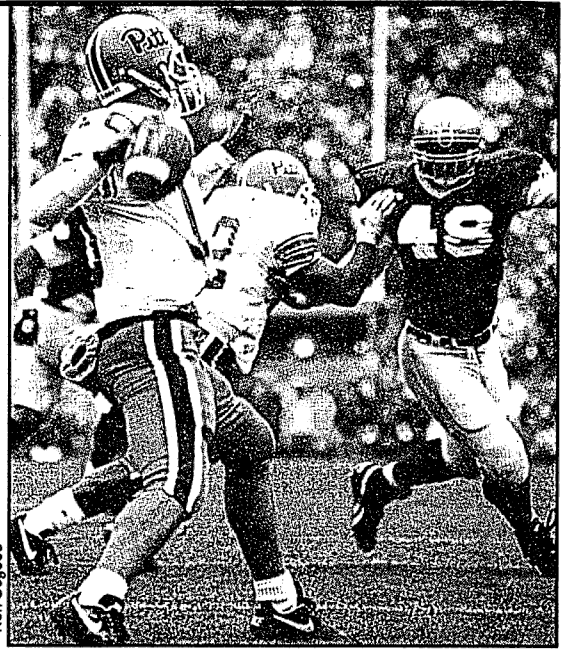


Pummeling

Notre Dame handed Pittsburgh a stinging defeat as the Irish marched to a 44-0 victory



Ken Osgood



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(Above) Panther quarterback Pete Gonzalez rushes to launch a pass as defensive end Renaldo Wynn closes in. (Left) Junior tailback Lee Becton breaks a Panther tackle on his way to the end zone.

the Panthers

by Jake Schaller

October 9, Notre Dame —

A collective sigh of relief could be heard from the Notre Dame faithful as the Irish rolled through the fourth quarter of their game with the University of Pittsburgh Panthers. Notre Dame's performance in the first half hardly befitted a team ranked number four in the nation. When they came out in the second half, however, the Irish looked unbeatable, and the second half surge was enough to give Lou Holtz his fourth largest victory with the Irish.

At the start of the game the Irish appeared to be on their way to a performance that would turn the contest into an embarrassment for Pitt by halftime. The defense sent the hapless Pitt offense three and out, and after a punt, the Notre Dame offense took

over possession at their own 26 yard line. After starting out with a 22 yard pass from senior quarterback Kevin McDougal to senior flanker Lake Dawson, the Irish faced a fourth and one. Coach Lou Holtz appeared confident by going for the first down on this play, and again on a fourth and three that Notre Dame faced four plays later. Junior running back Lee Becton negotiated the first fourth down conversion with a seven yard run. Then junior fullback Ray Zellars caught a quick dump pass from McDougal, which he turned into a 14 yard gain. Becton ended the 74 yard drive with an eight yard scamper into the end zone.

The Pitt offense was able to gain ground plays the next time that it had the ball. Sophomore quarterback John Ryan threw to senior wide receiver Junior Green for a pick-up of 16 yards, and junior running back Curtis Martin ran 12 yards for two first downs. But then the Panthers were penalized 15 yards on two delay of game penalties and an illegal procedure call.

Following another punt from Pitt, McDougal and the Irish offense began to sputter. After driving from their own 19 yard line to the Pitt 35, McDougal overthrew Becton down the middle and was intercepted by sophomore defensive back David Sumner.

Ryan did not return at quarterback; freshman Pete Gonzalez replaced him at the helm. "We had decided to play Gonzalez this week, to see what he could do," said Pitt's Head Coach Johnny Majors. It was not an auspicious start. On his fourth play and first collegiate throw, Gonzalez tossed an interception. It was an ill-advised throw in the left flat toward junior wide receiver Bill Davis who had his back turned. Senior cornerback Greg Lane picked the pass off and returned it to the Pittsburgh 19 yard line.

Notre Dame took advantage of its field position. On the first play McDougal handed off to Zellars, who ran up the middle, broke through a tackle and strutted into the end zone.

The defense again stepped up, giving the Panthers' offense, with Ryan again at quarterback, only three plays before sending them off the field. The Irish then drove 59 yards to the Pitt 28, exclusively on the ground, with freshman tailback Randy Kinder doing most of the damage. But on a first down, McDougal fumbled the snap, and Pitt recovered.

The Panthers drove to the Notre Dame 40 yard line where they faced a fourth and one. Majors reinserted Gonzalez, who ran a quarterback keeper to the right side, where he was stopped by sophomore defensive end Thomas Knight for no gain.

Despite Knight's fourth down stop, the Irish were unable to capitalize, and McDougal was intercepted again, this time by senior defensive back Maurice Williams. Pitt ran two plays for a yard, and the half ended with Notre Dame up by the not-so-commanding score of 13-0.

In the second half, junior quarterback Paul Failla was brought in to lead the Irish. He moved Notre Dame from their own 11 to the Pitt 28, but on fourth down and four Becton was hemmed in for a two yard loss on an option pitch left.

The defense then held the Panthers and forced them to punt. This became the norm as the defense instituted the "Steel



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Junior tailback Lee Becton leaves the Panther defense in the dust as he rushes down the field. Becton had his first 100 yard game against Pitt, racking up 146 yards in 16 carries.

Curtain," holding the Pitt offense to no first downs and 11 total yards in the second half. The defense allowed the Panthers across the 50 yard line only once in the entire game and allowed Pitt only 122 total yards, notching their second shut-out of the year.

With Failla in at quarterback, the Irish drove to first and goal from the Pitt nine, fueled by a 34 yard run by Becton. But the Panthers' defense held, and the Irish had to settle for a field goal. Fifth-year senior kicker Kevin Pendergast booted the 27 yarder and made the score 16-0.

McDougal returned when the Irish took the field again, and he took advantage of his second chance. Becton ran for 35 yards on this drive, including a terrific 26 yard scamper, and Zellars ran for 20, including an 11 yard romp for his second touchdown.

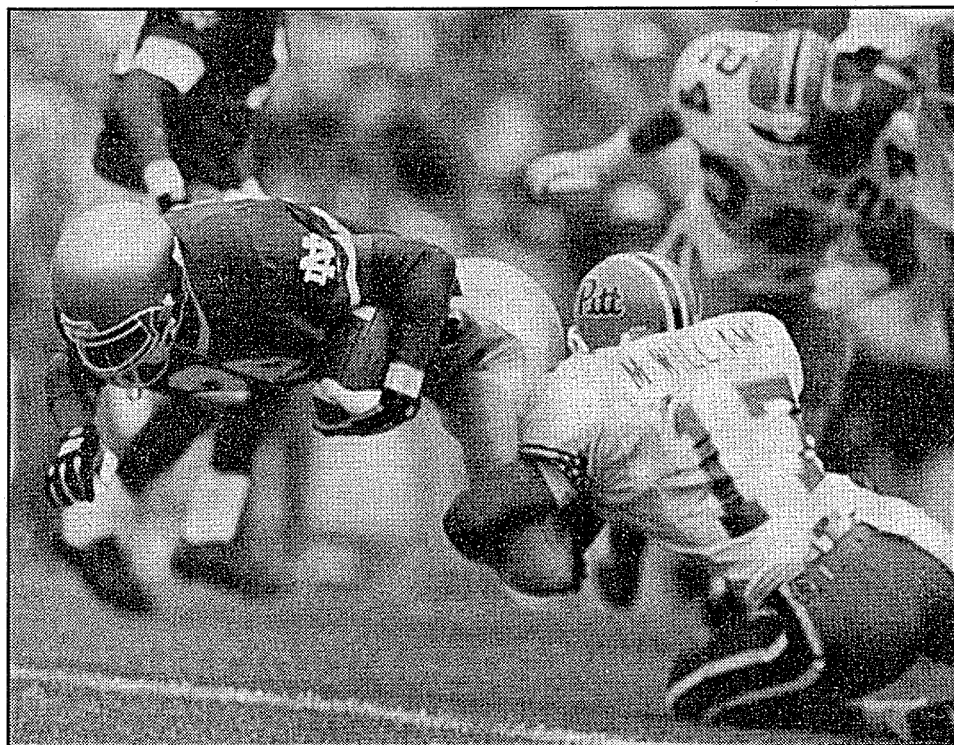
"We didn't do anything on offense that gave us a prayer or as much of a chance," said Majors.

Notre Dame's ensuing drive was 86 yards, taking just two plays. Sophomore split end Derrick Mayes made up for two earlier drops with a catch where he outmaneuvered Pitt's Williams for the ball on his way to a 55 yard gain. On the next play, Kinder received a pitch right and sped 31 yards into the end zone for the first touchdown of his collegiate career. The run was successful with the help of a crushing block thrown by freshman fullback Marc Edwards that allowed Kinder to turn the corner.

On the kick-off, Edwards made another big play, nailing Pitt's kick returner freshman defensive back Denorse Mosely after a 16 yard return.

With Paul Failla back under center, the Irish marched down the field, covering 52 yards in 11 plays, in a drive that featured

Panther defensive back Maurice Williams tries desperately to hold on to freshman tailback Randy Kinder. Kinder had a 31 yard run into the end zone for his first touchdown with the Fighting Irish.



Brent Tadsen

freshman tailback Robert Farmer, senior fullback Dean Lytle, freshman tailback Randy Kinder and Edwards all carrying the ball, with Farmer scoring on a three yard run.

"Kinder, Farmer and Edwards will continue to play a big role on our team. Lee Becton is fully recovered and playing very, very well and I also think we should get the ball to Zellars more," said Coach Holtz.

As a running back corps, we are taking pride in everything we do," said Zellars. "We labeled ourselves 'As Hard As They Come' at the beginning of the season because there was a lot of doubt about our backs because of the big names that have been there in the past."

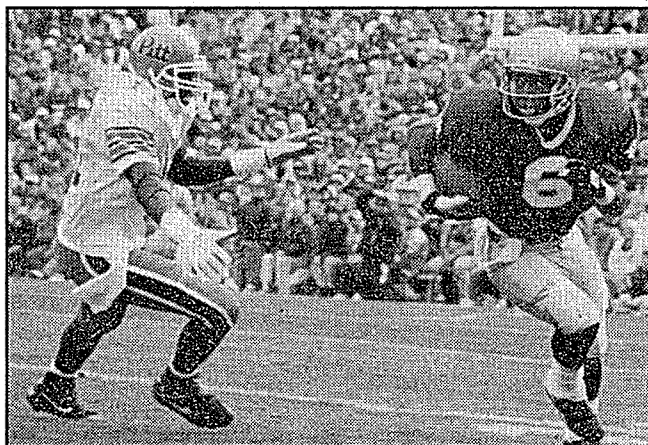
According to Becton, the number of backs also helps them to stay fresh during the game.

"Getting a breather gives you a chance to get your legs back. It really helps. A lot of people get a lot of playing time. And I think that it has made our running game stronger," Becton said.

Whatever the reason, the running backs more than pulled their weight with 371 yards rushing in the game.

After Farmer's touchdown, the Irish were

up 37-0 and Pitt seemed utterly demoralized. This showed on the Panthers' next two plays. On the kickoff, senior wide receiver Rod Harpst began a return, but after only nine yards, sophomore defensive back An-



Junior flanker Mike Miller deftly maneuvers around Panther defensive back Denorse Mosley, returning one of the many Pitt punts of the day.

Brent Tadsen

thony Dorsett ran into him, and both players tripped and fell to the ground. And the first play from scrimmage, Gonzalez ran into his fullback.

Not including, that is, the punt after the previous series. Cochran kicked a 35-yarder

to the Notre Dame 40 yard line where the ball was handled by senior Jeff Burriss, a safety, goal line running back and now punt returner. After catching the ball, Burriss side-stepped two tacklers before streaking up the middle of the field, breaking Cochran's shoulder tackle at the Pitt 30 and continuing into the end zone for a crowd-electrifying 60 yard return.

It was just a matter of running through the holes that the other guys created. They did a great job blocking and it was just a matter of taking what they gave me and everything just happened," said Burriss.

"We were glad to win today, and have a winning season. In the first half we turned the ball over three times — that was disappointing. The second half we dominated the game," said Holtz.

The Irish moved to 6-0 on the season and were elevated to number three in the polls while Pitt slipped to 1-4. Majors was impressed with the Irish team that delivered the fourth notch in the loss column.

"Notre Dame is an extremely talented football team, a solid team all around," said Majors. □

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	7	6	10	21	44
Pittsburgh	0	0	0	0	0

1st Quarter ND: Becton 8 run (Pendergast PAT) at 8:36
 2nd Quarter ND: Zellars 19 run (2 pt. conv. failed) at 12:03
 3rd Quarter ND: Pendergast 27 FG
 ND: Zellars 11 run (Pendergast PAT) at :42
 4th Quarter ND: Kinder 31 run (Pendergast PAT) at 13:00
 ND: Farmer 3 run (Marsh PAT) at 6:29
 ND: Burriss 60 punt return at 4:44

Team Statistics

	ND	UP
First Downs	21	5
Rushing	24	4
Passing	7	1
Penalty	0	0
Rushing	371	84
Passing	168	38
Total Net Yards	539	122
Average Gain Per Play	7.2	2.7
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	1-0
Penalties-Yards	3-20	7-41
Punts-Averages	0-0	8-43.6
Kickoff Returns	0	140
3rd Down Conversions	6-11	3-12

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND - Becton 16-142-1, Kinder 9-74-1, Zellars 12-67-2, Farmer 6-27-1, McDougal 4-20, Failla 3-15, Edwards 3-12, Klusas 2-8, Lytle 3-6 UP - Martin 19-72, West 2-11, Green 1-3, Colicchio 2-3, Gonzales 4-(-2), Ryan 2-(-3)
 Passing: ND - McDougal 12-7-132-0-2, Failla 5-4-36-0-0 UP - 12-8-38-0-1, Gonzales 3-0-0-0-1
 Receiving: ND - Zellars 3-23, Mayes 2-74, Dawson 2-27, Jarrell 1-16, Stafford 1-13, Becton 1-8, McBride 1-6 UP - Martin 7-22, Green 1-16