

Nick Spangler

The "Thunder and Lightning" backfield of tailback Reggie Brooks (shown above) and fullback Jerome Bettis struck for 113 rushing yards apiece against Brigham Young.

Holtz-o-mania

Friday's proclamation became Saturday's performance

by Greg Borkowski

The Brigham Young football weekend marked the introduction of a new phenomenon at Notre Dame called "Holtz-o-mania." During the Friday night pep rally, in front of a full house in the Joyce Athletic and Convocation Center, Notre Dame head coach Lou Holtz spoke a proclamation that resounded off the ears of enthusiastic Irish fans. Holtz made a promise few could forget. "We will not lose another game at home," he belted out. This confident outburst was followed by a violent spike of the microphone.

Devon McDonald later said, "After he spoke at the rally and then just threw the mike down, I could have jumped on the moon after that. That carried over to the game."

Holtz-o-mania broke loose once again on gameday. In front of a capacity crowd of 59,075 at Notre Dame Stadium, Lou Holtz charged onto the field after a missed holding

call and applied the dreaded sleeper hold on referee Thomas Thamert.

This newfound intensity that Holtz created proved to be a turning point in both the game and the season.

Previous to the game, BYU possessed one of the most proficient passing attacks in college football, causing some to worry if Notre Dame's defense could handle it. However, Notre Dame itself boasted one of the best overall offenses in college football. This first-ever meeting between the two football teams had the making to be a high scoring affair.

Fears of BYU's offense were temporarily dispelled early in the game after a punt by Craig Hentrich buried the Cougars on their own 6-yard line. On the next play, BYU quarterback Ryan Hancock and running back Jamal Willis misfired on a handoff creating a fumble. Senior linebacker Demetrius DuBose recovered the ball in the end zone for Notre Dame's first touchdown.

BYU did not give up. Kicker David

Lauder nailed an 18-yard field goal to put BYU on the scoreboard. The Irish countered in the middle of the second quarter with a 65-yard drive ending in a 1-yard toss from senior quarterback Rick Mirer to senior tight end Irv Smith, making the score 14-3.

The BYU passing game continued to remain effective. In the closing minutes of the first half, the Cougars reached the Irish 20-yard line twice, having to settle both times for field goals. At halftime, the Irish lead was only five points.

The second half marked a change of pace for Notre Dame. Senior tailback Reggie Brooks, sidelined with an injury in the first half, returned to boost the Irish offense.

"I couldn't accelerate and get around the corner on the sweeps. But I could make the plays that hit straight up, the little counterplays, and the misdirections," remarked Brooks.

Early in the second half, senior wideout Ray Griggs snuck behind the Cougar secondary for a 54-yard touchdown pass play

that increased the Notre Dame lead to 21-9. The Cougars countered with a 78-yard scoring drive of their own capped off by a 5-yard pass from sophomore quarterback Ryan Hancock to Tim Nowatzke.

Turned away once before at the 5-yard line, the Irish offense returned on their next possession as junior fullback Jerome Bettis plowed into the end zone. This 18-yard rumble increased the Irish lead to 28-16.

On the next two Cougar possessions, Hancock, threw interceptions. McDonald pressured Hancock to throw the first one to junior Irish safety Jeff Burris. Five plays later, Bettis scored on a 5-yard run.

Junior cornerback Tom Carter snagged the second interception on the Cougar 30-yard line. Just five plays later, Burris, who also plays halfback on the goal line offense, pushed his way into the end zone from the 1-yard line to make the final score 42-16.

BYU did eventually pass for 339 yards, 244 of which came in the first half, but the second half belonged to the Irish both offensively and defensively. In the last 23 minutes of the game, the Irish offense tallied 21 unanswered points, while the defense forced Cougar quarterback Ryan Hancock to throw three interceptions. Two misdirected passes were snagged by Jeff Burris and one was caught by Tom Carter.

"We kind of influenced the coaches a little bit. We told them we wanted to play man," stated Burris. "We felt we could put a little pressure on him, and they responded."

By the conclusion of the game, BYU had only accumulated 3 yards rushing. Yes, only nine feet. Junior free safety John Covington inspired the defense to hold the Cougars to a virtually nonexistent ground game with 13 tackles. He also led the Irish defensive unit to hold BYU to under 100 yards of total offense and one touchdown.

"Our defense came together in the last 25 minutes," remarked Holtz.

In the second half, Notre Dame amassed 323 yards, 229 of which were rushing, and controlled the ball for 36 minutes.

Lamented BYU head coach LaVell Edwards, "Their ability to run the ball, control the clock and get long drives, plus our inability to run were the biggest factors in the game."

Hancock completed 28 of his 56 attempted passes for a total of 339 yards, one

touchdown and three interceptions.

"They just came out and took charge in the third quarter. Their big thing was their ability to run the football and score," explained Edwards.

Part of the defensive success could be attributed to Holtz's strategy of using five defensive backs — Jeff Burris, Tom Carter, John Covington, Greg Lane and Bobby Taylor — to stifle the Cougar passing threat.

Stated Holtz, "They played as well as as I've ever had a secondary play while I was coaching. We had a chance to make seven interceptions."

With the defense playing well, the Irish offense had plenty of time to add to its lead. Despite injuries, both fullback Jerome Bettis and tailback Reggie Brooks contributed to the lead with spectacular performances. Combined, they rushed for 226 yards. Bettis ran for 113 yards and two touchdowns, barreling in on runs of six and 18 yards. Brooks suffered a groin injury only one week before the game but still managed to carry the ball 14 times in the second half, amassing 113 yards.

Brooks explained, "I didn't know what to expect. I was kind of cautious about how to go about running. The second half coach said he was going to put the ball in my hands. So I had to come through and perform."

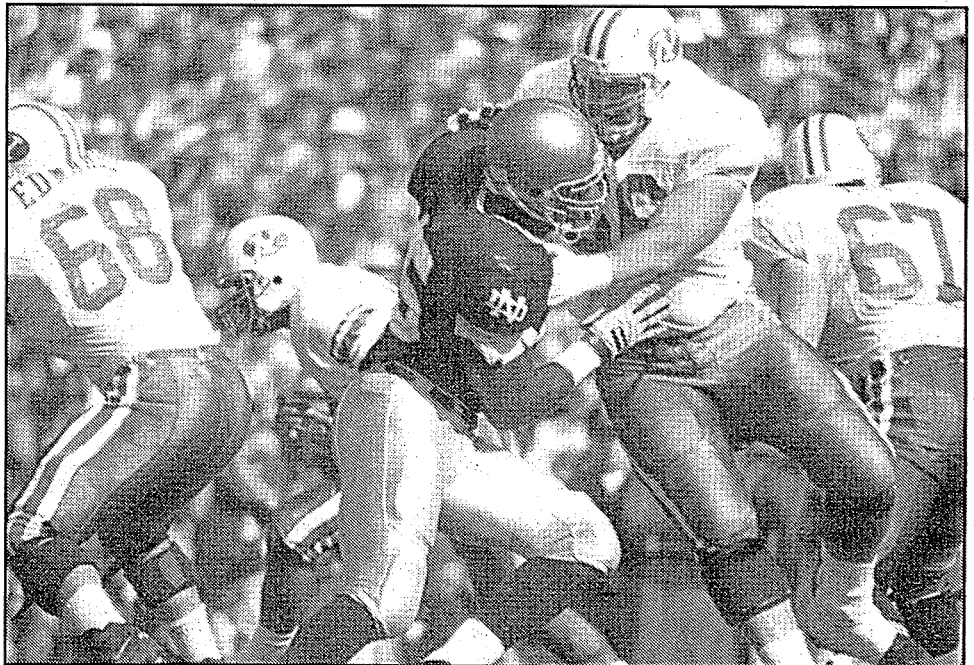
Mirer also performed well, completing 12 of 17 pass attempts for 164 yards and two touchdowns. The second of these was an impressive 54-yard bomb to senior flanker Ray Griggs. The passing attack was made possible by the tough offensive line play.

Explained Holtz, "We said this would be a game of challenges, and the offensive line had to take it on themselves to answer one."

Stated junior center Tim Ruddy, "We had a hard time in the first half, we had a lot of running plays but couldn't get a rhythm going. So we said we would try to run it, try to take it to them."

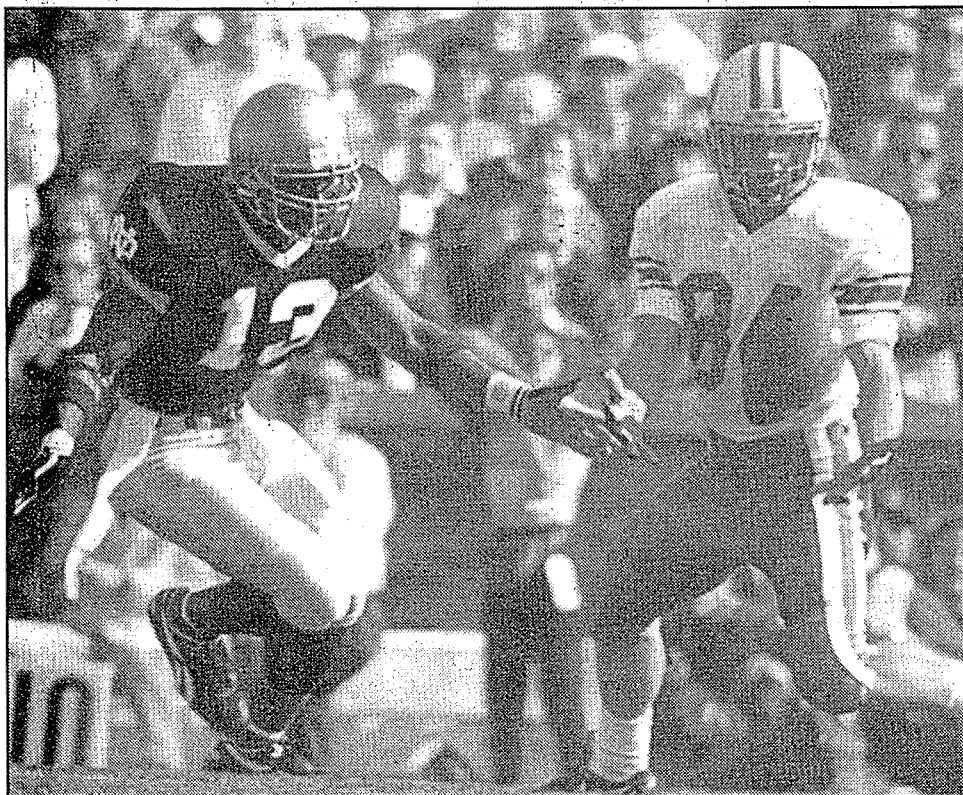
Junior guard Aaron Taylor explained the difficulty in the first half by saying, "The first half, we were always one block away from getting the job done and moving the ball. I think the second half we had to get things done up front. We just had an attitude change, stopped talking, start rolling and playing football."

Despite the Irish offense pouring in 28 points in the second half, the two moves that caused the most excitement were made by Notre Dame head coach Lou Holtz. At Friday night's pep rally, Holtz promised that his team would not lose another game at home the rest of the season, despite the powerful opponents of Boston College and Penn State looming ahead. Although Holtz



Ken Osgood

About Holtz's explosive speech, defensive end Devon McDonald said, "After he spoke at the rally and then just threw the mike down, I could have jumped on the moon after that. That carried over to the game."



Ken Osgood

Brigham Young, perennially a passing team, threw the ball 56 times for 28 completions totalling 339 yards. However, cornerback Tom Carter (above) and company intercepted three Cougar passes and allowed only one touchdown through the air.

would later comment that he should not be held accountable for things he says at pep rallies, the promise had been made.

Then, during the second half, Holtz saw a BYU offensive lineman commit a holding penalty. Since referee Thomas Thamert apparently missed it, Holtz re-enacted it for him, or — more appropriately — on him. What resulted was a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct and a resounding ovation from the fans. Holtz later apologized for the incident, claiming that he only wanted to show how he interpreted the play. Holtz's stranglehold fired up the defense even more, assisting to their superb effort.

"You saw how hyped he got with the officials. People watch their leaders and when your leader is as pumped as he was, it trickles down," explained McDonald.

This 42-26 victory over Brigham Young was especially satisfying for Notre Dame because it marked a turning point in the season for the defense and since the Irish have had trouble playing well after having an extra week to prepare for a game.

"I think the open week really helped us prepare for the rest of the season. We tackled better, we executed better and we played well in the second half for the first time in a

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

	1	2	3	4	Final
Notre Dame	7	7	7	21	42
Brigham Young	3	6	7	0	16

1st Quarter ND: DuBose fumble recovery (PAT) at 10:37
BY: Lauder 18 FG at 7:21

2nd Quarter ND: Smith 2 pass from Mirer (PAT) at 12:34
BY: Lauder 21 FG at 10:43
BY: Lauder 28 FG at 3:08

3rd Quarter ND: Griggs 54 pass from Mirer (PAT) at 11:41
BY: Nowatzke 5 pass from Hancock (PAT) at 7:43

4th Quarter ND: Bettis 18 run (PAT) at 12:46
ND: Bettis 6 run (PAT) at 8:37
ND: Burris 1 run (PAT) at 5:04

Team Statistics

	ND	BY
First Downs	26	20
Rushing	19	5
Passing	7	14
Penalty	0	1
Rushing	291	13
Passing	164	339
Total Net Yards	455	352
Average Gain Per Play	5.8	4.9
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	3-2
Penalties-Yards	5-56	2-17
Punts-Averages	5-36.8	4-49.0
Kickoff Returns	2-59	2-59
3rd Down Conversions	7-15	4-14

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND - Bettis 21-113-2, Brooks 15-112, Zellars 6-37, Lytle 5-22, Mirer 11-7, Stafford 1-4, Burris 1-1, Failla 1-(-5)
BY - Hall 5-27, Hunter 1-13, Heimuli 1-6, Willis 4-5, Hancock 5-(-38)

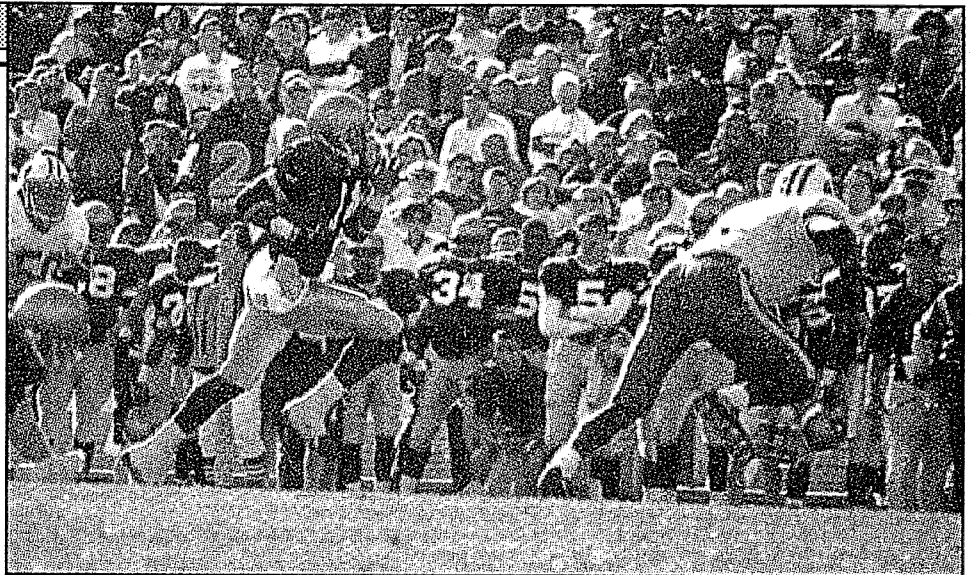
Passing: ND - Mirer 17-12-151-2-0, McDougal 1-1-13-0-0 BY - Hancock 56-28-339-1

Receiving: ND - Griggs 3-78-1, Bettis 2-23, Maves 2-21, Smith 2-16-1, Pollard 1-13, Dawson 1-9, Zellars 1-3, Miller 1-1
BY - Rex 7-76, Nowarzke 4-68-1, Christensen 4-33, Heimuli 3-51, Drage 3-25, Hall 3-23, Doman 1-33, Willis 1-17, Sterling 1-9, Valdez 1-4

long time," said Holtz.

This solid victory helped build the team's confidence heading into the season's last four games, three of which were against top 20 teams Boston College, Penn State and Southern Cal. With a dominating rushing attack, a consistent passing attack, an improving defense and a promise of victory by a typically conservative coach lingering in the air, Holtz-o-mania continued to mount with the anticipation of more difficult match-ups in the future. □

Wide receiver Ray Griggs streaks down the sideline to score on a 54-yard touchdown pass from Rick Mirer



Ken Osgood

D, D, D Defense

by Jim Kuser

The Notre Dame Stadium's capacity crowd of 59,075 had come to see the Irish shake the thunder down upon the Stanford Cardinal on Saturday, October 3. Instead, it saw the Cardinal soar to a 33-16 upset victory. The Irish offense, ranked first in the country at that time, had sputtered. As for Notre Dame's defense, it took the heat for relinquishing 33 unanswered points. Changes had to be made.

Enter first year defensive coordinator Rick Minter.

"In the game of football, the performance of the defense is often judged by one thing: the final score," said Minter. "In the Stanford game, we were lacking our fundamentals, and so we had to regroup."

A doctor of defense, Minter assessed the ailment, rationalized its cure and performed the appropriate surgery.

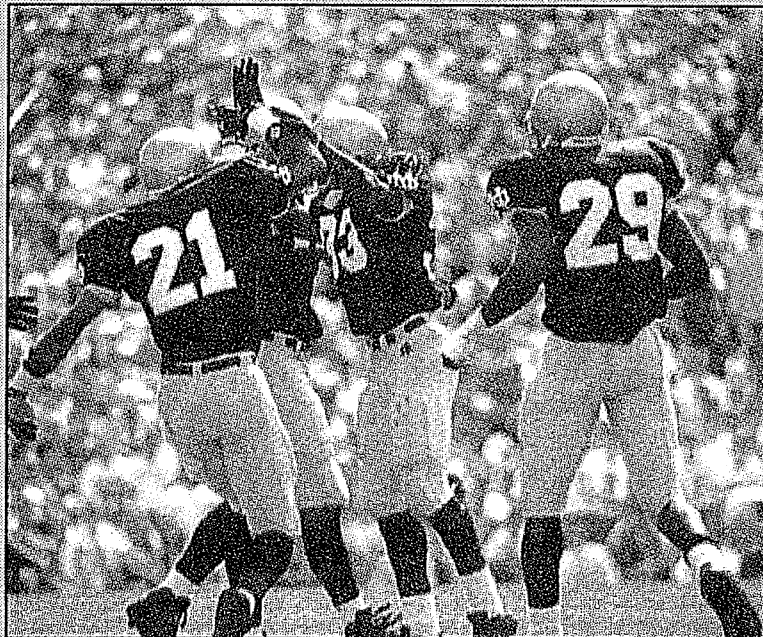
"We beefed up our underneath pass coverage," said Minter.

After focusing on defensive skills for a week, Notre Dame beat Pitt, 52-21. Minter was displeased that

his defense relinquished 21 points. After focusing on defensive strategies for a week, Notre Dame beat Brigham Young, 42-16. In Minter's estimation, this was the first game in which all of his defensive pistons fired.

"We were living third downs like Murphy's Law until that game," said Minter.

To say that the defense picked up its performance "a little bit" is an understatement. After recording a season high six quarterback sacks against Southern Cal,



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Notre Dame's defense had many moments of celebration in the second half of the season. "All we needed was a change of attitude to get it going," explained linebacker Devon McDonald.

Notre Dame had a total of 37 on the season, compared to 11 last season. Since the Brigham Young game, Notre Dame shut down Heisman hopefuls like running backs Chuckie Dukes of Boston College and Richie Anderson of Penn State, both of whom had been averaging over 100 yards a game before being held respectively to under fifty and eighty yards against Notre Dame. This season, the defense held four of college football's top ten offenses to between 100 and 150 yards below their averages.

Arguably Notre Dame's best defensive game was against Boston College. En route to a 54-7 victory, the Irish defense played, according to Minter, "55 minutes of perfect defensive football in which we allowed only fifty yards, no third down conversions and no defensive penalties. In the last five minutes, however, we gave up a 48-yard reception, a touchdown, a third down conversion, 122 yards and a penalty. We let ourselves down."

Perfection is Minter's expectation. "It is the obligation of our defense to come into the game and to leave things as we found them for our offense to attend to. We play in the name of pride and in this case ... pride is a shutout." □