

Nothing

Fancy

The Irish kept the ball on the ground and ran wild

by Amanda Clinton

Before the game, Pittsburgh students were allowed onto the field *en masse*, creating a circus-like atmosphere while waiting for their team to charge into the stadium from the locker room. With fists shaking in the air, homemade signs and taunts, the Panther fans blocked the tunnel and the entrance of the Notre Dame football team into the stadium. One student, with police officers chasing, pushed to the front of the crowd and shoved a sign in front of Notre Dame head coach Lou Holtz which read, "33-16 Stanford." While police officers grabbed the student, Holtz called after them to bring back the sign.

"I felt our players ought to see it. I thought that was great. It was really great, and I compliment the Pitt students on the enthusiasm they had down there on that field," raved Holtz.

After a devastating loss to Stanford, the Irish bounced back despite the hostile crowd and an energized Pittsburgh squad. But the game plan was different. The Panthers witnessed the return of the run.

Stated Holtz, "I thought we played football Notre Dame style. It was nothing fancy."

With a total of 323 yards on 48 carries, the Panthers could not hold off the Irish, but in the first quarter it seemed questionable. After the first fifteen minutes, Notre Dame was up by only one point, 7-6.

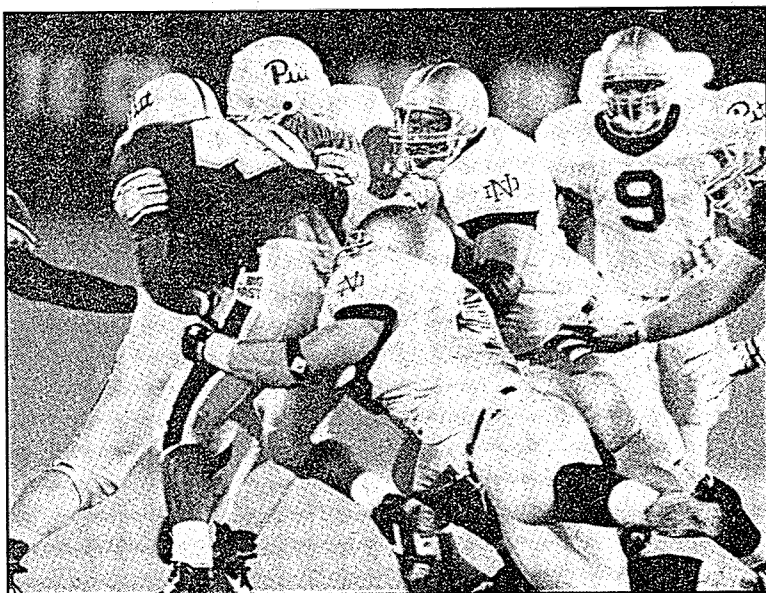
Stated Pittsburgh head coach Paul Hackett, "We spent all week on how to stop the run, and they got 300 yards. Someone has got to make the big play, and we didn't."

The Panthers received the kickoff but were unable to get a first down, so Pitt was forced to punt the ball away. The Irish received the ball at the Notre Dame 48-yard line, but Notre Dame was only able to move down to the Panther 21-yard line, where the Irish were on a fourth down with nine yards to go and opted for the field goal. Senior kicker Craig Hentrich, a normally automatic place kicker, was wide right on his 38-yard attempt.

The Panthers then devoured the clock taking six and a half minutes and 16 plays to fight their way down to the Irish 3-yard line, where they had three yards left to go on a fourth down and opted for a field goal. With five minutes left in the first quarter, Pittsburgh was beating Notre Dame 3-0.

After this slow start, the Irish woke up. It took Notre Dame only four plays to put seven points on the scoreboard. Sophomore flanker Mike Miller received the kickoff at the 5-yard line and danced his way up the gridiron for 29 yards to the 34-yard line. Senior fullback Reggie Brooks pushed his way up the middle for three yards. Senior

quarterback Rick Mirer then tossed up a pass to Miller for an 18-yard gain. After an injured rib against Stanford, junior wide



Nose tackle Jim Flanigan brings down a Panther runner for a loss in the backfield.

receiver Lake Dawson was back in action. With a perfect pass from Mirer, Dawson gained 37 yards for the Irish, bringing Notre Dame to the 8-yard line. Bettis took the handoff and easily glided into the endzone, making the score 7-3.

The Pitt offense took control of the game and drove all the way down the field but were stopped by the powerful Irish defense once within striking distance of paydirt. The Panthers only made it to the 11-yard line before they were forced to settle for another field goal.

"It's disappointing because of how things started out," stated Pitt sophomore running

back Tim Colicchio. "We were fired up and came at them. Then we came out real hard and started slipping again. We know we could have played against them."

The first quarter ended with Notre Dame on top by one point, 7-6.

But within three minutes, the Irish tallied another touchdown. Bettis powered down the field from the Irish 29-yard line for 29 yards, his longest

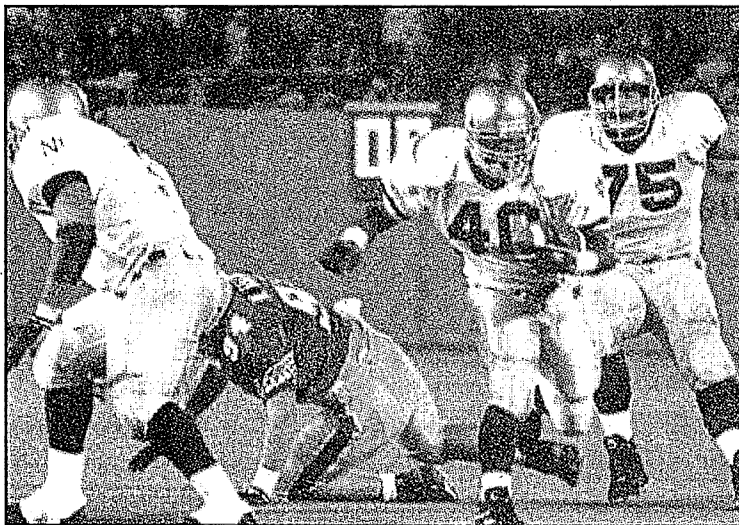
run in the season up to that point. On a second down with 15 to go, Mirer attempted a pass to senior tight end Irv Smith but it fell to the ground incomplete. On the next play, with a confidence not witnessed in the Stanford game just a week earlier, Mirer looked for an open receiver but could not find one. He scrambled and dodged defenders before throwing a pass to Dawson for a 14-yard gain. Mirer then held onto the ball for the next two plays, carrying the Irish to the 1-yard line. Junior tight end Oscar McBride ran into the endzone, turned and easily caught a perfect pass from Mirer for a touchdown, putting Notre Dame on top 14-6.

The Pitt offense could not gain a first down on their next possession. With a sack by Irish senior linebacker Brian Ratigan of Pittsburgh quarterback Alex Van Pelt, the Panthers were forced to punt the ball away into a charged Irish offense.

With 11 minutes left in the first half, Holtz sent in the second string. Explained Holtz, "I thought it would be good for morale to shuffle people around."

Junior quarterback Kevin McDougal was in for Mirer. He directed the offense into the endzone in just five plays. Sophomore tailback Lee Becton took over for Brooks and took control of the running game. After a handoff from McDougal, he took off down the field and was almost in the clear before he was grabbed around the ankles by Panther

sophomore defensive back Anthony Dorsett and brought down at the Irish 38-yard line



Tailback Reggie Brooks splits the seam on this 18-yard scamper into enemy territory.

Mike Bennett

for a gain of 27 yards. On the Panther 31-yard line on a third down with six to go, McDougal shot off a bullet to freshman wide receiver Derrick Mayes who pulled in the pass and ran into the endzone for a 31-yard gain.

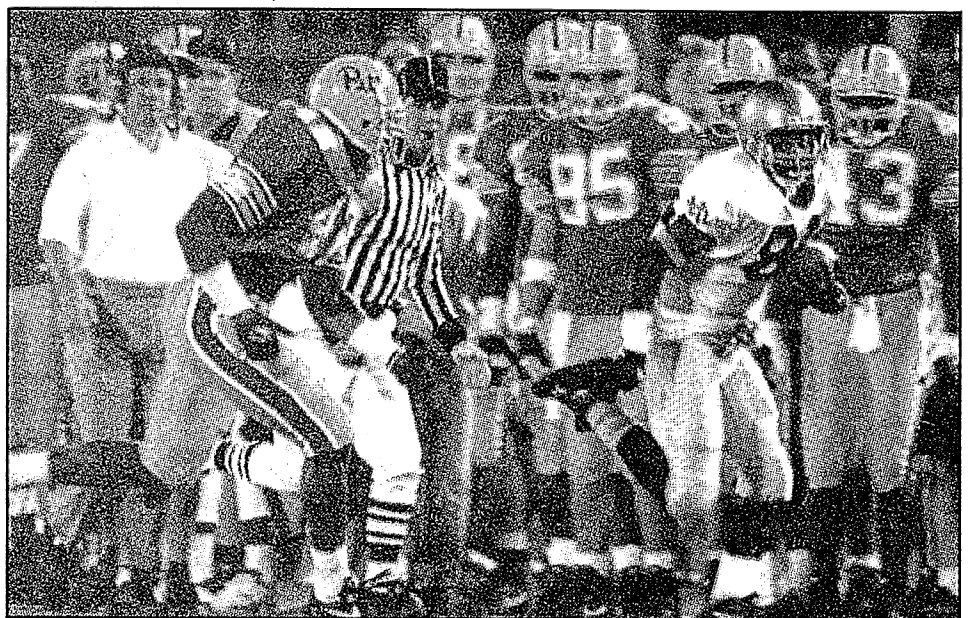
"I was happy that we were able to rebound

offense took to the field, and within two plays senior quarterback Alex Van Pelt threw the ball into the arms of Irish cornerback Tom Carter for an interception. Notre Dame started off on the Irish 34-yard line. But with Mirer back in as quarterback, the Irish were unable to get a first down.

Said Holtz, "They had some turnovers and we didn't have any. That's a big turning point in any football game. People will look at it and won't realize how tough a game this really was."

Despite receiving the ball on their own 41-yard line, the Panthers were unable to convert their opportunity into a score. But when the Irish offense returned to the gridiron, they were easily able to tally another seven points. In nine plays and three and a half minutes, the Irish drove down the field from the 18. Brooks received the handoff on the Panther ten yard line and carried the ball down to the three. On the next play, Bettis scored a touchdown on a 2-yard run. The half ended 30 seconds later with a score of 28-6.

The Irish dominated in the first half with 318 total yards compared to Pitt's 136. Notre Dame started off the second half,



Wide receiver Mike Miller races downfield on this 18-yard reception

Mike Bennett

from last week," said Mayes. "There was no doubt in my mind that when we stick together and believe in each other we win."

With the scoreboard reading Notre Dame 21 - Pittsburgh 6, the slowly fading Panther

punting the ball away when the Irish could not convert a fourth down. On the other hand, the Pittsburgh offense came out of the locker room charging. In 15 plays and 78 yards, the Panthers struggled down the field

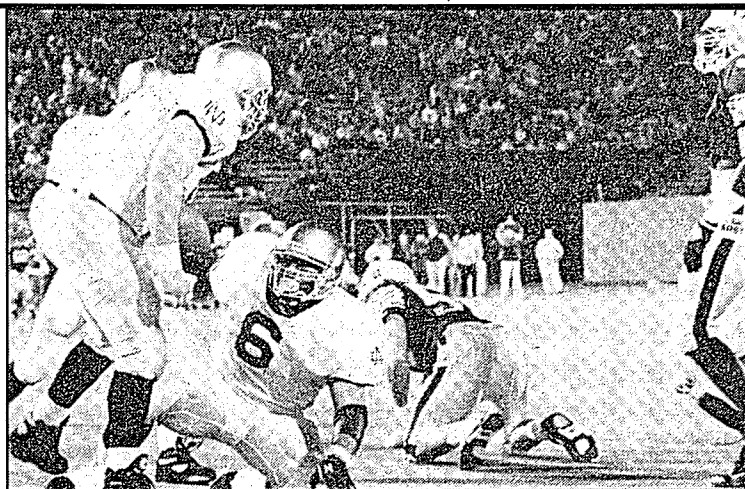
for a touchdown, to narrow the margin to fourteen points, making the score 28-14.

The Irish countered with another touchdown set up by Bettis. He received the handoff on the Panther 27-yard line and plowed his way up the middle for a gain of 17 yards. On the next carry, Bettis took the ball into the end zone with a 10-yard run, pushing the score up to 35-14.

When the fourth quarter began, the Panthers had the ball on their own 47 when Van Pelt tossed up a ball for sophomore wide receiver Dietrich Jells but had it picked off by junior free safety Jeff Burris. In just three plays, Notre Dame was back in the end zone. On the Irish 31-yard line, on a third down with 12 yards to go, Mirer rolled left and lofted the ball to Mayes. The ball floated into his arms, and he glided into the end zone for a 69-yard touchdown.

The Panthers countered by fighting their way into the end zone with a less impressive scoring drive. Van Pelt threw an 8-yard touchdown pass to junior wide receiver Chad Askew to make the score 42-21.

Despite an attempted onside kick by the Panthers, which the Irish recovered, Notre



Fullback Jerome Bettis scores one of his three touchdowns of the night.

Dame was only able to notch a field goal, eight plays later, increasing the difference to 24 points, making the score 45-21.

The Irish kicked off to Pitt, but the Panthers fumbled the ball and Lytle recovered for the Irish on the Panther 28-yard line. Sophomore quarterback Paul Failla took over the offense on the next series. Notre Dame used the run to take the Irish to the 4-yard line where Failla capped off the scoring

drive with a touchdown. After the field goal, the Irish were on top with a score of 52-21. "It was encouraging to go out and play well on offense, especially since a lot of people got to see action and execute well," stated Mirer. With three minutes left on the clock, the Panthers tried to drive down the field to diminish the extent of their loss but had to punt the ball away. The game ended with the Irish on top, 52-21, marking the fifth straight time Notre Dame has defeated Pittsburgh. And after a devastating loss to Stanford the week before, the Irish left Pittsburgh with restored confidence and buoyed spirits to take on Brigham Young at home. □

GAME SUMMARY

Scoring Summary

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Final |
|-------------------|---|----|---|----|-------|
| Notre Dame | 7 | 21 | 7 | 17 | 52 |
| Pittsburgh | 6 | 0 | 8 | 7 | 21 |

1st Quarter UP: Conley 20 FG at 5:28
ND: Bettis 8 run (PAT) at 4:25
UP: Conley 48 FG at 0:14

2nd Quarter ND: McBride 1 pass from Mirer (PAT) at 11:41
ND: Mayes 31 pass from McDougal (PAT) at 7:30
ND: Bettis 2 run (PAT) at 0:32

3rd Quarter UP: Jells 5 pass from Van Pelt 2 CN at 5:56
ND: Bettis 11 run (PAT) at 2:29

4th Quarter ND: Mayes 69 pass from Mirer (PAT) at 13:16
UP: Askew 8 pass from Van Pelt (PAT) at 8:46
ND: Hentrich 25 FG at 5:20
ND: Failla 3 run (PAT) at 3:10

Team Statistics

| | ND | UP |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| First Downs..... | 24 | 20 |
| Rushing..... | 14 | 6 |
| Passing..... | 7 | 12 |
| Penalty..... | 3 | 2 |
| Rushing..... | 308 | 81 |
| Passing..... | 213 | 252 |
| Total Net Yards..... | 521 | 333 |
| Average Gain Per Play..... | 8.02 | 4.27 |
| Fumbles-Lost..... | 0-0 | 2-1 |
| Penalties-Yards..... | 6-60 | 4-50 |
| Punts-Averages..... | 2-43.5 | 4-41.3 |
| Kickoff Returns..... | 68 | 23 |
| 3rd Down Conversions..... | 5-10 | 9-19 |

Individual Statistics

Rushing: ND- Bettis 13-94-3, Brooks 14-84, Becton 8-65, Mirer 7-31, Zellars 2-21, Lytle 2-8, Failla 1-3-1, Stafford 1-2
UP- Colicchio 15-61, Dukes 10-20, Brooks 3-2, VanPelt 3-1, Martin 1 (-3)
Passing: ND- Mirer 16-9-182-2-0, McDougal 1-1-31-1-0 UP- VanPelt 42-25-246-2-1, Ryan 3-1-6-0-0, Moncrief 1-0-0-0-1
Receiving: ND- Mayes 2-100, Dawson 2-51, Jarrell 1-20, Griggs 2-6, Miller 1-18, Bettis 1-17, McBride 1-1 UP- Jells 6-62, Bouyer 6-62, Belvin 5-36, Davis 4-60, Colicchio 2-12, Askew 1-8, Martin 1-6, Curran 1-6