

NOTRE DAME BASEBALL TEAM (40-6-1) CLAIMS TOP RANKINGS IN TWO OF THREE MAJOR NATIONAL POLLS
Irish remain first in *Collegiate Baseball* poll, move up to first in *Baseball America* poll and second in coaches poll.

The Notre Dame baseball team has maintained its No. 1 ranking in the *Collegiate Baseball* magazine poll while also moving into the top spot in the *Baseball America* poll and jumping to a No. 2 ranking in the *USA Today/ESPN* coaches poll, after winning five of six games last week to yield an overall record of 40-6-1 for the Irish.

Notre Dame nearly gained consensus No. 1 status but Louisiana State (35-13-1) jumped from 5th to 1st in the coaches poll, after a 5-0 week for the Tigers that included a three-game sweep at Alabama. Notre Dame—which was ranked 4th in last week's coaches poll—actually received the most 1st-place votes in this week's coaches poll (15 of 41, with LSU receiving 14) but the Tigers collected 956 total points, followed by the Irish (930), Miami (904), last week's No. 1 Stanford (894) and Southern California (810).

Each of the rankings is the highest ever for Notre Dame in each poll.

Notre Dame maintained the same point total in the *Collegiate Baseball* poll (473) while LSU climbed from 3rd to 2nd place in the *CB* poll (rising from 463 points to 469) and Stanford (33-13) dropped from 2nd to 6th, following a 1-3 week. The other top five teams in this week's *CB* poll include Cal State Fullerton (33-11), USC (32-16) and Miami (35-11).

The Irish moved atop the *Baseball America* poll while Nebraska (35-12) fell from the top spot into 4th, after losing three games last week. LSU, Miami and USC round out the top five in the current *BA* poll.

Notre Dame nearly joined Georgia Tech and Stanford as the only teams in 2001 to be ranked No. 1 in all three polls during the same week, with the Yellow Jackets holding that distinction in the preseason polls and again on Feb. 5, Feb. 26 and March 5 while the Cardinal were a consensus No. 1 on April 9 and 16.

Notre Dame—which owns the nation's fourth-longest active streak of consecutive seasons with 40-plus wins (13)—currently leads the Division I ranks in team ERA (2.51) while ranking just behind Stetson (40-6) for the nation's top winning percentage, at .862. The Irish have won 19 of their last 20 games while batting .338 as a team during that 20-game stretch.

The Irish rolled to 20 victories and just two losses during the month of April—highlighted by three-game sweeps on the road versus two of the top teams in the BIG EAST Conference, defending champion Rutgers and St. John's (for perspective, the previous five ND teams combined to post just two 3-game road sweeps in BIG EAST play).

The baseball team last week became the fourth Notre Dame sport to earn a No. 1 national ranking in 2000-01, with the others including the women's soccer team, the men's fencing squad and the national championship women's basketball team.

Notre Dame has been led all season by its pitching, with senior righthanders Aaron Heilman (11-0, 1.43 ERA) and Danny Tamayo (7-1, 1.42) ranking as one of the nation's top pitching tandems. Heilman is nearing the end of his storied career that has included All-America honors each of his first three seasons and a spot in the USA national team while his 39-7 career record (with 390 strikeouts) includes wins in 21 of his last 22 decisions.

Sophomore righthander J.P. Gagne (5-2, 3.40) came on strong during the month of April as Notre Dame's No. 3 starter, winning all five of his decisions during the month while allowing just seven earned runs in 34 innings pitched (for a 1.85 ERA in April).

With Heilman, Tamayo—and now Gagne—leading the way, Notre Dame's starting pitchers have combined for a 1.90 ERA during the first 47 games of the 2001 season while sophomore righthander Matt Laird has developed into a quality closer, with his 1.59 ERA including a recent 15-inning shutout streak (he has not allowed a run in 14 of his 16 outings).

The surging Irish offense includes six starters who are hitting .290 or higher, led by sophomore rightfielder and cleanup hitter Brian Stavisky (.396—second-best in the BIG EAST Conference—plus 45 RBI, 4 HR) and the team's first two batters in the lineup: freshman second baseman Steve Sollmann (.392, 30 RBI, 5 HR, 19 SB) and the team's leadoff batter, junior centerfielder Steve Stanley (.389, 27 SB, 54 R). Junior third baseman Andrew Bushey is batting .351 overall while leading the BIG EAST with a .443 batting average in conference games.

Defensively, the Irish have totaled just 63 errors in 47 games—leading to just 30 unearned runs for the opponents. Bushey (9 errors) and senior shortstop Alec Porzel (8) have combined to make the Notre Dame defense particularly strong on the left side of the infield.

COLLEGIATE BASEBALL TOP 30

Team	W-L	Pts (Prev.)
1. NOTRE DAME	40-6-1	473 (1)
2. LSU	35-13-1	463 (3)
3. Cal State Fullerton	33-11	459 (5)
4. USC	32-16	458 (6)
5. Miami	35-11	455 (7)
6. Stanford	34-12	464 (2)
7. Nebraska	35-12	461 (4)
8. Stetson	40-6	450 (8)
9. Mississippi	34-14-1	442 (10)
10. Florida State	35-14	448 (9)
11. East Carolina	41-10	432 (14)
12. Tulane	39-8	424 (17)
13. Rice	38-15	439 (11)
14. Clemson	31-17	436 (12)
15. Georgia Tech	33-14	429 (15)
16. Arizona State	30-15-1	420 (19)
17. Pepperdine	32-14	428 (16)
18. Georgia	31-15	392 (28)
19. Tennessee	34-13	435 (13)
20. South Carolina	33-17	411 (24)
21. Baylor	30-15	419 (20)
22. Central Florida	36-10	410 (25)
23. Mississippi State	26-15	422 (18)
24. South Alabama	32-11	408 (26)
25. Ohio State	34-11	405 (NR)
26. Auburn	29-12	412 (23)
27. Fla. International	35-12	386 (30)
28. Delaware	33-11	387 (NR)
29. San Diego	32-16	384 (NR)
30. Oral Roberts	35-9	380 (NR)

Italics – Notre Dame 2001 opponent.

BASEBALL AMERICA TOP 25

Team	W-L	Prev.
1. NOTRE DAME	40-6-1	2
2. LSU	35-13-1	5
3. Miami	35-11	4
4. Nebraska	35-12	1
5. USC	32-16	6
6. Cal St. Fullerton	33-11	8
7. Stanford	34-12	3
8. Tulane	39-8	9
9. Rice	38-15	7
10. East Carolina	41-10	17
11. Georgia Tech	33-14	13
12. Central Florida	39-11	16
13. Stetson	40-6	19
14. Pepperdine	32-14	10
15. Mississippi	34-14-1	15
16. Florida State	35-14	11
17. Clemson	31-17	12
18. Baylor	33-17	18
19. Georgia	31-15	25
20. Arizona State	30-15-1	20
21. South Alabama	36-12	23
22. Tennessee	34-13	14
23. Wake Forest	34-15	21
24. South Carolina	34-14	NR
25. UC Santa Barbara	32-11	NR

Note: Records as of April 29.

USA TODAY/ESPN COACHES POLL

Team (1st)	W-L	Pts (Prev.)
1. LSU (14)	35-13-1	956 (5)
2. NOTRE DAME (15)	40-6-1	930 (4)
3. Miami (2)	35-11	904 (3)
4. Stanford (4)	34-12	894 (1)
5. USC (2)	32-16	810 (7)
6. Nebraska (1)	35-12	794 (2)
7. Cal State Fullerton (1)	33-11	790 (9)
8. Rice (1)	38-15	710 (6)
9. Tulane (1)	39-8	621 (13)
10. Georgia Tech	33-14	615 (10)
11. Stetson	40-6	610 (11)
12. Florida State	35-14	581 (8)
13. East Carolina	41-10	460 (19)
14. Baylor	33-17	454 (14)
15. Arizona State	30-15-1	359 (16)
16. Clemson	31-17	355 (15)
17. South Carolina	34-14	350 (17)
18. South Alabama	36-12	315 (21)
19. Tennessee	34-13	300 (12)
20. Central Florida	39-11	279 (20)
21. Mississippi	34-14-1	252 (22)
22. Georgia	31-15	214 (NR)
23. Pepperdine	32-14	187 (18)
24. Ohio State	34-11	88 (NR)
25. Florida International	35-12	84 (25)

Others receiving votes: Wake Forest (77), Texas Tech (62), Auburn (42), Oklahoma State (31), Long Beach State (30), Southwest Missouri State (29), UC-Santa Barbara (28), Rutgers (24), Oral Roberts (16), Delaware (16), Mississippi State (14), Evansville (13), Winthrop (11), Cincinnati (4), Middle Tennessee State (4), Texas Christian (4), Florida (3), San Diego (2), Campbell (1), Ball State (1), Texas (1).