

NOTRE DAME BASEBALL GAMEDAY NOTES (vs. Florida State; June 8, 2002)

ONE WIN FROM OMAHA: On the heels of Friday's 10-4 win over Florida State, the Notre Dame baseball team – for just the **fourth time** in its history – stands just **one win shy** of advancing to the College World Series ... the **1957** team opened the old four-team District Playoffs (fields set based on geography) with wins over Alma (18-2) and host team Western Michigan (4-2) and then had two chances at beating Northwestern to advance to Omaha ... the Wildcats won the first game (9-2) but ND's 6-1 win sent the Irish on to the CWS ... two years later, homestanding ND was in the same position after wins over Detroit (10-0) and Minnesota (12-4) but WMU rallied for a pair of wins over ND (2-0, 9-6), denying the Irish a trip to the **1959** CWS ... 33 years then elapsed before ND again crept within one win of Omaha, this time at the University of Miami for the **1992** Atlantic Regional ... the Irish opened the '92 NCAAs with a 5-1 loss to South Carolina but then reeled off wins over the host Hurricanes (6-3), Delaware (12-6) and South Carolina (11-2) to set up a winner-take-all title game between ND and UM (the Hurricanes won, 5-1, to earn a 1992 CWS berth).

CAPE COD REUNION: For the second straight night, several ND batters (as many as six) will face a pitcher that they have seen before during games in the prestigious Cape Cod wooden-bat league (last night's FSU starter, Matt Lynch, played for the Hyannis Mets in the summer of 2000 and the Harwich Mariners last year) ... FSU's starter for tonight, senior RHP Blair **Varnes**, pitched the last two summers with Harwich ... six of ND's nine starters tonight have played in the Cape, led by the first three batters in the lineup: senior CF Steve **Stanley** (Brewster Whitecaps, 1999 and 2000), sophomore 2B Steve **Sollmann** (Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox; '01) and junior LF Brian **Stavisky** (Hyannis Mets; '00-'01) ... ND senior C Paul **O'Toole** played for Brewster in 2000 and Yarmouth-Dennis in 2001 ... two other ND players were active in the Cape for part of the 2001 summer: senior 3B/C Andrew **Bushey** (spent first month with Yarmouth-Dennis, before shoulder surgery) and senior DH Matt **Bok** (played with Bourne Braves during second half of summer) ... FSU 3B Ryan **Barthelemy** was a teammate of Stavisky on the 2001 Hyannis squad.

UPDATED CAREER NCAA STATS

Player	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B/3B/HR	BB/K	RBI	SB	AVG
Billmaier	14/14	48	7	26	6/1/0	6/7	15	0-1	.542
Sollmann	9/9	40	16	21	1/3/1	4/3	11	2-2	.525
Stanley	17/17	71	24	30	5/1/0	12/6	9	4-8	.437
Stavisky	14/14	63	19	26	5/0/6	6/9	25	2-3	.413
O'Toole	17/17	66	18	24	6/1/6	10/6	16	2-3	.379
Sanchez	4/4	16	4	6	1/0/0	2/1	1	0-0	.375
Thaman	9/9	33	8	10	1/0/0	2/1	3	0-1	.303
Bushey	17/17	66	8	10	3/0/1	7/6	11	1-1	.288
Bok	11/5	27	7	8	1/0/2	0/7	8	0-0	.296
Meyer	14/6	34	2	6	1/0/0	3/6	0	1-1	.177

Career NCAA Slugging Percentages: Billmaier (.708), Sollmann (.775), Stavisky (.778), O'Toole (.758)

STREAK BUSTERS: Notre Dame halted FSU's 25-game winning streak, an Atlantic Coast Conference record and one of the longest winning streaks in Division I baseball history ... ending noteworthy winning streaks has become a tradition for ND athletic teams, led by the following:

- Nov. 17, 1957 – Dick Lynch's TD provides the only scoring as the ND football team wins at 2nd-ranked Oklahoma, 7-0, ending the Sooners' **47**-game winning streak (still the NCAA record)
- Jan. 19, 1974 – Dwight Clay's jumper from the corner provides the winning points in the closing seconds as the ND men's basketball team halts UCLA's **88**-game winning streak (still the NCAA record) in a 71-70 thriller
- Oct. 2, 1994 – The Notre Dame women's soccer team plays to an 0-0 tie versus perennial power North Carolina in a game played in St. Louis, stopping UNC's **92**-game winning streak (still the NCAA record) ... one year later, the Irish women's soccer team claims the national title (with wins over UNC and Portland in the College Cup semifinals and final)
- Jan. 15, 2001 – The Notre Dame women's basketball team stuns BIG EAST Conference rival Connecticut, 92-76, in a midseason game at the Joyce Center – halting UConn's **30**-game win streak and vaulting ND on to the national title.

ANOTHER GREAT YEAR: ND has posted 48 wins for the fourth time in team history, one shy of last year's team record for wins ... in fact, ND's 39-5 record in its last 44 games leaves the Irish (49-15) with virtually the same record it posted in the landmark 2001 season (49-13-1).

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BEATING NO. 1: Notre Dame has defeated the nation's top-ranked team twice previously in NCAA Tournament action, winning **6-3 at Miami** in the **1992** Atlantic Regional before posting an **8-1 win at Clemson** in the **1994** East Regional ... the Irish also have posted a pair of regular-season wins over Miami when the 'Canes were ranked No. 2 in the nation: 2-1 at UM on March 27, 1992, and 1-0 at ND's Eck Stadium on May 12, 1999 (the Irish were one strike from the no-hitter, with Miami suffering its first shutout loss in 248 games).

BOOMING BATS: The Irish now are **batting .455** in the 2002 NCAAs (76-for-167) – with at least 15 hits in all four games – after hitting just .208 in the BIG EAST Tournament and .319 in the regular season ... ND opened the NCAAs by hitting 15-for-34 vs. Ohio State, followed by 32-for-56 vs. South Alabama, 14-for-36 vs. OSU and 15-for-41 vs. Florida State ... the Irish also are batting .516 with runners in scoring position during the NCAAs (compared to .206 by the opponents), led by Steve Sollmann (8-for-8), Kris Billmaier (5-for-8) and Brian Stavisky (6-for-10) ... the Irish own a 52-17 NCAA scoring edge ... ND batters have reached on 60.0% of their leadoff plate appearances in the NCAAs (41.7% by the opponents), led by Sollmann (4-for-4) and Billmaier (4-for-5).

QUICK STARTERS: ND owns an 8-1 scoring edge in the 1st inning of its four NCAA Tournament games this season (17-3 in the first three innings), plus a 10-2 edge in the 7th ... ND and its opponents have played even in the 5th (1-1) and 6th (3-3) innings during the 2002 NCAAs.

TWO-OUT POISE: Notre Dame collected **six 2-out RBI** in the win over FSU, on Kris Billmaier's single in the 3rd inning, a bases-loaded walk from Javier Sanchez in the 6th, and 8th-inning singles by Steve Sollmann, Brian Stavisky and Billmaier (two-RBI).

RIGHTIES DELIVER: Notre Dame's righthanded hitters went **10-for-16** in the win over FSU, vs. mostly lefthanded pitching (the lefthanded bats were 5-for-25) ... ND's righties were led by Steve Sollmann (3-for-4), Kris Billmaier (4-for-5) and Ken Meyer (2-3), with Javier Sanchez adding a 1-for-4 night ... Brian Stavisky (3-for-4) accounted for most of the hits by ND lefthanders and scored or drove in five of the 10 Irish runs (3 RBI, 3 R, including 2-run HR).

HOTTEST BAT ON A HOT TEAM: Sophomore 2B **Steve Sollmann's** first-inning double vs. FSU was his 11th hit in 13 at-bats, with 19 total bases in that NCAA stretch (HR, 2 3B, 2B) ... he then had a sacrifice bunt, flyout, infield hit and an RBI single to left field – yielding a 13-for-16 streak and a .525 career batting average in the NCAAs (21-for-40, **including 16-for-20** in the 2002 NCAAs) ... Sollmann's NCAA hot streak has vaulted his season batting average from .314 to .365.

CLUTCH HOME RUNS: Junior LF **Brian Stavisky** now has **six career home runs in the NCAAs**, all during the last two seasons (in nine games) ... Stavisky opened the 2001 NCAAs with a home run vs. Wisconsin-Milwaukee (12-4) before playing a key role in the 11-10, 10-inning elimination game vs. UC Santa Barbara (with an early 2-run shot and the go-ahead solo blast in the 10th) ... he then hit a 2-run shot in the final 5-4 loss to Florida International, his fourth HR of the 2001 South Bend Regional ... Stavisky hit one of ND's five home runs in last week's 25-1 win over South Alabama, before launching his two-run shot to open the scoring vs. FSU.

POWER SURGE: Notre Dame has totaled **10 home runs in eight 2002 postseason games** (including the BIG EAST Tournament), with junior LF Brian Stavisky and senior DH Matt Bok each hitting two, plus one each from Steve Sollmann, Javier Sanchez, Andrew Bushey, Paul O'Toole, Kris Billmaier and Brent Weiss ... the Irish totaled 43 home runs during the 2002 regular season (in 55 games).

STAVO HITS ANOTHER: Brian Stavisky hit his **32nd career home run** in the FSU game, good for 8th in ND history (one behind '92 graduate Joe Binkiewicz and one ahead of current ND senior C Paul O'Toole).

RARE HOMER: Freshman RHP **Grant Johnson** served up a home run for the **first time in his last 47 innings** and for just the fourth time this season (he now has logged 95.2 innings).

DON'T FORGET BILLY: Junior RF Kris Billmaier now is **batting .542** (26-for-48, with six doubles and a triple) in 14 career NCAA Tournament games, compared to just .275 in the rest of his games with the Irish (he is batting 11-for-17 in the 2002 NCAAs, with two doubles and a triple) ... Billmaier's .647 batting in the 2002 NCAAs actually ranks second on the team, behind Steve Sollmann's 16-for-20.

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FRESHMAN FORCE: Grant Johnson – who already owned the ND freshman records for strikeouts (now 82) and innings pitched (now 95.2) – tied another Irish freshman record vs. FSU by posting his ninth win of the 2002 season, matching the victory total by David Sinnes in his freshman season (9-2, in 1990) ... Johnson now is **9-4, with wins in each of his last seven** decisions.

IN-STATE DELIVERY: Senior DH and Fort Myers native **Ken Meyer** posted just his eighth multi-hit game of a 2002 season that has been hampered by shoulder problems, batting 2-for-3 in the win over FSU (plus a key two-out walk that preceded a bases-loaded walk by Javi Sanchez) ... Meyer had failed to post two-plus hits in his previous 12 games, dating back to a 2-for-2 effort on April 3 vs. Valparaiso.

687 STARTS FOR SENIOR TRIO: Senior CF **Steve Stanley** started his 251st consecutive game last night, just four shy of the NCAA Division I record (255) set by Arizona's Chip Hale from 1984-87) ... senior C **Paul O'Toole** made his 224th start (moving past 1992 grad. Craig Counsell for 4th in ND history) while senior C **Andrew Bushey** made his 212th start, good for 9th in ND history (one behind '97 grad. Mike Amrhein) ... they are the only ND classmates ever to start 200-plus games, combining for 687 starts from 1999-2002.

MORE OF THE SAME: Notre Dame last night added to its team records for sacrifice bunts (65) and double plays (62) in a season.

FSU TIES: Senior DH **Ken Meyer** (Fort Myers, Fla.) – who attended Mike Martin's FSU Baseball Camps as a youth –has several ties to Florida State, as **his father Rudy was a 1965 graduate of FSU**, his uncle and namesake Ken Meyer was the offensive coordinator for the Seminoles football team in the early 1960s, and his sister Jennifer is a FSU graduate (as is her husband, Forrest Green) ... Rudy Meyer never had the chance to see his son play in a Notre Dame uniform, as he died suddenly in the spring of 1998 ... freshman RHP Chris Niesel's father, Rudy Niesel, also is a FSU alum (class of 1973).

NCAA VETERANS: Notre Dame's veteran lineup – led by the program's first senior class ever to advance to four NCAA Regionals – now has combined for **113 career starts in NCAA Tournament games**, with 179 hits, 99 RBI and 16 HR.

KEY PIECE OF THE PUZZLE: The Irish are **43-8** in games started by sophomore 2B **Steve Sollmann**, compared to just 5-7 in games when he was out of the starting lineup (due to a quad pull).

NCAA WINS ON OPPONENT'S FIELD: Notre Dame has a noteworthy history of posting NCAA Tournament upsets on the opponent's field, with wins at Miami (1992), Florida State ('93 and '02), Clemson ('94) and Mississippi State (2000).

CAPE COD BOUND: Four ND freshman pitchers are slated to pitch in the Cape Cod League this summer, including last night's starter Grant **Johnson** (unless he is named to the USA National Team) ... Johnson is slated to join the Brewster Whitecaps, which have featured current ND senior CF Steve Stanley and senior C Paul O'Toole in recent years ... fellow freshman RHPs Chris **Niesel** and Martin **Vergara** will spend the 2002 summer with Falmouth while their classmate John **Axford** is set to follow current junior LF Brian Stavisky on the Hyannis Mets ... sophomore 2B Steve Sollmann also is slated to return to the Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox.

HOME-FIELD EDGE: Prior to the FSU game, Notre Dame had played on an opponent's on-campus field just three times in the previous 42 games (an April 20-21 series at Seton Hall), with off-campus series versus Georgetown (in Bethesda, Md.) and Villanova (in Philadelphia) ... ND's record on the opponent's field in 2002 is 5-5 (0-1 at New Orleans, 0-3 at Connecticut, 1-1 at West Virginia, 3-0 at Seton Hall, 1-0 at FSU).

VISITOR'S DUGOUT FAMILIAR GROUND: Prior to the Super-Regional, Notre Dame's previous seven NCAA Tournament games included five in which the Irish had to play out of the visitor's dugout at Eck Stadium, with the Irish going 3-2 in those games ... ND lost the pivotal second game of the 2001 South Bend Regional vs. Florida International (7-6 in 10 innings), as the visiting team, before knocking off UC Santa Barbara as the visiting team (11-10, in 10) and losing the title game to FIU (5-4, again as the visitor) ... ND's last two games at the 2002 South Bend Regional (25-1 vs. South Alabama, 9-6 vs. Ohio State) also were played from the visitor's dugout ... ironically, ND will play out of the FSU dugout in Saturday's game and Sunday, if necessary (as the Irish won the coin flip).

ROAD WARRIORS: Notre Dame traditionally plays its first month of the season away from home, with the 2002 season also including the first two BIG EAST weekends on the road ... that added up to five weeks and 22 games on the road to start the 2002 campaign, with ND standing at just 12-10 before the home opener vs. BYU on April 1.

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FREQUENT FLYERS: Notre Dame's 33 games outside of Eck Stadium this season include just one in which the team traveled by bus (vs. Michigan in Grand Rapids, on April 30) ... the Irish have traversed the country in 2002, with trips to: New Orleans; Homestead, Fla.; Round Rock and San Antonio, Texas; Storrs, Conn.; Morgantown, W. Va.; Washington, D.C.; South Orange, N.J.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Philadelphia; Bridgewater, N.J.; and now Tallahassee, Fla.

COMMON OPPONENTS: Notre Dame and Florida State have faced three common opponents in 2002 – Pittsburgh, Arizona State and South Alabama – with ND owning a 2-2 record vs. those teams while FSU was 6-1 ... ND split vs. Pitt (5-7, 12-2) before beating ASU (9-4) and South Alabama (25-10) ... FSU swept three-game series from Pittsburgh (7-2, 11-2, 15-3) and Arizona State (9-4, 5-3, 6-4) but lost a 6-5, 10-inning game vs. South Alabama

BRAGGING RIGHTS: Two current members of the Arizona Diamondbacks had a rooting interest in last week's Notre Dame-South Alabama game, as third baseman **Craig Counsell** ('92) was a four-year starter with the Irish while outfielder **Luis Gonzalez** was a star player with the Jaguars ... the two made a friendly wager on the outcome of the ND-USA game and Gonzalez was the loser ... as a result, Gonzalez must wear a Notre Dame baseball hat and t-shirt around New York City throughout the Diamondbacks' trip to the Big Apple next week (for a series vs. the Yankees).

NCAA STATS UPDATE: ND senior CF **Steve Stanley** (.445 entering week, now .442) moved back into 5th on the NCAA batting average charts, behind Southern University teammates Rickie Weeks (.495) and Antoin Gray (.449), Clemson SS Khalil Greene (.482) and Curtis Granderson of Illinois-Chicago (.483) ... ND junior LF Brian Stavisky (.404, now up to .409) would have checked in at 43rd on the batting average charts (he meets the at-bats minimum but is a few games shy of the NCAA's minimum of 75% of the team's game played, due to a pair of injuries that caused him to miss 18 games) ... ND was one of just five teams in the nation that entered the week ranked in the top 25 for staff ERA (10th, 3.46) and team batting average (25th; .322, up to .323) ... the others include Rice (2nd, 2.86; 23rd, .323), Clemson (3.89, 22nd; .327, 15th), Long Beach State (3.54, 13th; .323, 22nd) and Illinois-Chicago (3.31, 6th; .328, 13th).

ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICAN ELITE: Senior 3B **Andrew Bushey** (Boardman, Ohio) and junior LF **Brian Stavisky** (Port Allegany, Pa.) were named to the 2002 Verizon/CoSIDA Academic All-America team ... In the process, ND became the only Division I baseball program to produce multiple Academic All-Americans in each of the past three seasons ... Stavisky – a third team Academic All-American in 2001 - registered his fourth Dean's List GPA (3.47) in six semesters at Notre Dame, with a 3.50 cumulative GPA as a business management major ... the three-time all-BIG EAST performer becomes the ND baseball program's fifth repeat Academic All-American and joins former outfielder Dan Peltier as the only Irish players to earn multiple Academic All-America honors prior to their senior season ... Bushey graduated with a 3.43 GPA as a finance major, after posting his third Dean's List semester with a 3.75 GPA in the 2002 spring semester ... the second-year team co-captain ranks among ND's leaders in several major categories while earning all-BIG EAST Conference honors each of the past two seasons ... ND is the only Division I baseball program to produce multiple Academic All-American in each of the past three years, with IF Jeff Perconte and LHP Mike Naumann earning the honor in 2000 while Naumann and Stavisky were 2001 honorees ... the Irish were one of five 2002 teams with two Academic All-Americans, with the others including two other teams (Stanford and Nebraska) that are preparing for Super-Regional play, plus Alabama and Air Force. Notre Dame and Nebraska are the only teams to produce multiple Academic All-Americans in both 2000 and 2001 ... ND baseball players have combined for 19 Academic All-America awards (since 1977), including five repeat honorees in OFs John Loughran ('86, '87), Peltier ('88, '89) and Stavisky ('01, '02), 1B Joe Binkiewicz ('91-'92) and Naumann ('00-'01).

HONORS CONTINUE FOR STANLEY: Senior CF **Steve Stanley** – already named a first team All-American by *Collegiate Baseball* – received the same honor this week from *USA Today Baseball Weekly*, which also named Stanford's Sam Fuld and Ryan Kenning of New Mexico State as its three first team All-America outfielders (Stanley is the only outfielder named a first teamer by both CB and USA Today) ... **Stanley** – who earlier in the week became the fourth-highest drafted player in Notre Dame baseball history (as the 67th overall pick, by the Oakland A's) – joins OFs Peltier and Eric Danapilis and righthander Aaron Heilman as the only ND baseball players ever named a first team All-American by two of the major awarding organizations (*Baseball America* and the American Baseball Coaches Association have yet to name their All-America squads) ... Stanley joined Heilman (17th pick in 2001 first round, by the New York Mets) as the highest-drafted seniors in ND history while catcher Ken Plesha (16th overall pick in 1965, by the Chicago White Sox) is the only ND position player ever drafted higher than Stanley's second-round spot ... just eight players in the nation have been named a 2002 first team All-American by both *CB* and *USA Today*, with that group including Stanley and Florida State 3B Ryan Barthelemy, plus Nebraska C Jed Morris, Southern 2B Rickie Weeks and Clemson SS Khalil Greene – plus RHPs Brad Sullivan (Houston) and Tim Stauffer (Richmond) and LHP Justin Simmons of Texas.