

NOTRE DAME BASEBALL GAMES NOTES

vs. Western Michigan (April 9, 2003)

The Notre Dame baseball team (18-6, 5-1 BIG EAST) – ranked as high as 16th in the national polls – returns home this week for three scheduled games vs. Western Michigan (Wed., April 9; 5:05 p.m.) and vs. Chicago State and Bowling Green in a split doubleheader (Thur., April 10, starting at 4:05, both games seven innings) ... the Irish are riding an 11-game winning streak (4th-longest in the Paul Mainieri era), including a 7-0 homestand, and have won 14 of the last 15 (18-2 since the challenging season start that included two losses at Arizona State and losses to Nebraska and host Minnesota at the DQ Metrodome Classic) ... sophomore RHP **John Axford** (2.31, 5-0, 35 Ks, 16 BB, 28 H, .222 opp. batting in 35 IP) is slated to start vs. WMU while the Broncos will counter with senior RHP **Keith Perez** (5.52, 2-2, 30 Ks, 17 BB, 29 H, .248 opp. avg. in 29.1 IP) ... sophomore RHP **Martin Vergara** and freshman LHP **Tom Thornton** then are scheduled to start vs. Chicago State and Bowling Green, with the weekend rotation including sophomore RHP **Chris Niesel** and senior RHP **Ryan Kalita** vs. Creighton (in Omaha).

IRISH ADD THREE MAKEUPS – In addition to rescheduling of the Bowling Green game, ND has added two makeup games to replace last week's cancelled doubleheader vs. Boston College ... the Irish will play host to Central Michigan on Monday, April 14, while IPFW will make a visit to Eck Stadium on Thursday, April 24 (both games start at 5:05).

RADIO & LIVESTAT INFORMATION – All of ND's 2003 regular-season and postseason games again will be broadcast by South Bend-based WDND 1620 AM (and its sister station, WNDV 1490) ... the broadcasts are available at www.und.com (College Sports Pass subscription required) ... und.com also provides GameTracker livestats on the website's main page, for all home games and select road games (including this weekend's pair of games vs. Creighton).

DOUBLE-DIGIT WIN STREAKS – Notre Dame is in the midst of the eighth 10-plus-game winning streak of the nine-year Paul Mainieri era, with the previous double-digit runs including a 16-game streak in 2002 (tied for 3rd-longest in ND history), a 15-game run in '01 and a 13-game streak in '98 (plus 11-game streaks in '95 and '99 and 10-game streaks in '96 and '98).

BIG EAST STAT LEADERS

- Sophomore 3B/1B **Matt Edwards** ranks 8th among BIG EAST players in batting average (.385) and is 2nd among the conference's players in RBI (32) and slugging pct. (.615).
- Junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** also remains among the league leaders in several categories, including 1st in stolen bases (16) and runs scored (32), 3rd in total bases (65) and hits (44), 5th in slugging (.591) and 6th in batting (.400)
- Freshman CF **Brennan Grogan** continues to lead the BIG EAST with five triples.
- ND's current three-man rotation likewise rates among the BIG EAST's bests ... senior RHP **Ryan Kalita** and sophomore RHP **John Axford** are tied for the league's 2nd-best ERA (2.31, with Virginia Tech's Ryan Kennedy at 1.72) while sophomore RHP **Chris Niesel** is 9th on the league's ERA charts at 3.11 ... Kalita also ranks 3rd in low opponent batting avg. (.208) and 4th in wins (4-0) while Axford is 1st in wins (5-0), 9th in strikeouts (350 and 7th in opponent batting (.222) ... Niesel checks in at 2nd in Ks (45, two back of BC's Chris Lambert), 8th in opponent batting (.225) and 3rd in innings pitched (46.1) ... senior closer **J.P. Gagne** ranks 5th among BIG EAST pitchers in saves (4).

John Axford – Career Stats

Year	ERA	W-L	GP/GS	CG	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	2B-3B-HR	BF/B/Avg	WP	HB
2002	3.95	5-2	17/12	0	0	70.2	59	45	31	59	64	15-2-1	324/.231	7	6
2003	2.31	5-0	6/6	0	0	35.0	28	11	9	16	35	5-2-1	147/.222	6	2
Totals	3.41	10-2	23/18	0	0	105.2	87	56	40	75	99	20-4-2	471/.228	13	8

John Axford – 2003 game-by-game (all starts, WFU game at Metrodome)

Date	Opponent	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	HR	WP	HB	DP	Score	W-L	ERA
2/22	vs. Newman (@ASU)	6.0	8	2	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	15-5	W	3.00
3/2	vs. Wake Forest	7.0	4	1	1	2	4	0	1	0	0	2-1	–	2.08
3/10	vs. Navy (@UNF)	5.0	6	3	2	1	7	0	0	0	0	7-3	W	2.50
3/15	vs. Creighton (@JU)	6.0	5	2	2	2	8	1	3	0	1	10-3	W	2.62
3/23	at Villanova	5.0	2	1	1	4	7	0	0	0	0	3-2	W	2.48
3/29	Georgetown	6.0	3	2	1	5	8	0	1	0	1	13-3	W	2.31
Totals		35.0	28	11	9	16	35	1	6	0	2		5-0	2.31

Situational Pitching: .175 opp. batting with runners on, .289 with 2 outs ... 42.9% leadoff batters on base (3.8 per 9 IP) ... 35 groundouts, 26 flyouts

Axford's Nine-Inning Averages in 2003: 7.2 hits, 4.1 walks, 9.0 Ks, 9.0 groundouts (5.2 IP per start)

Axford's Nine-Inning Averages in 2002: 7.5 hits, 7.5 walks, 8.2 Ks, 9.6 groundouts (4.2 IP per start)

QUICK NOTES ON THE ND HITTERS (in probable batting order)

Steve Sollmann (Jr., 2B; Cincinnati, OH)

- * Riding nine-game hitting streak, with multiple hits in five of last six games
- * Leads team in batting (.400), runs (32), hits (44), total bases (65), walks (12), stolen bases (17) and leadoff on-base pct. (.615), 2nd in triples (3), slugging pct. (.591), on-base pct. (.459), RBI (24) and batting with runners in scoring pos. (.417)
- * Joins classmate Javi Sanchez (11 BB/6 Ks) as only ND batters with more walks (12) than Ks (8) in 2003
- * Has collected hits in 21 of 26 games, with 16 multi-hit games (five 3-hit games, plus 4-for-4 in gm 2 vs. Georgetown)
- * Twice BIG EAST player of the week (8-for-17 in week one, then 11-for-23 in first six games of Spring Break trip)
- * Hit 3-run inside-the-park HR in 3-2 win over Eastern Illinois

Brennan Grogan (Fr., CF; Tequesta, FL)

- * Has hits in 14 of the last 16 games (10 of them 1-hit games)
- * First on team in triples (5), sac. bunts (5) and 2-out batting (.429), 2nd in stolen bases (7), 3rd in runs (21) and batting with runners in scoring position (.393), 5th in batting avg. (.316) and RBI (14)
- * Made switch to CF and 2-hole on Spring Break trip
- * Hit go-ahead triple in 13th inning of 3-1 win over Vanderbilt

Matt Edwards (So., 3B/1B; Mechanicsville, VA)

- * Hit 15-for-15 (.600) in the last seven games, with nearly three RBI per game in that stretch (19)
- * Already has totaled 11 multi-RBI games, including four 3-RBI games and 4 RBI in second game vs. Georgetown.
- * Riding eight-game hitting streak
- * First on team in home runs (4), slugging pct. (.615), doubles (8), RBI (32), 2-out RBI (14) and batting with runners in scoring pos. (.487), 2nd in batting avg. (.385), hits (40), total bases (59) and 2-out batting (.412), 3rd in on-base pct. (.450)
- * Missed most of 2002 season due to broken leg

Kris Billmaier (Sr., RF; Woodinville, WA)

- * Looking to snap out of 5-for-25, 2-RBI slump in last six games ... has just two multi-hit games in last 11, with only one multi-RBI game in the last 12
- * First on team in doubles (8), 2nd in home runs (3), 3rd in hits (34), RBI (21), total bases (53) and leadoff on-base pct. (.500), 5th in slugging (.491)

Javi Sanchez (Jr., C; Miami, FL)

- * Has gone hitless in consecutive games just once all season (vs. Detroit and Valparaiso)
- * 2nd on team in walks (11), 4th in runs (20) hits (30), doubles (6) and total bases (41), 5th in on-base pct. (.400)
- * Joins classmate Steve Sollmann (12 BB/8 Ks) as only ND batters with more walks (11) than Ks (6) in 2003
- * Prep 2B who started at SS in 2002 after injuries to Matt Macri and Matt Edwards

Matt Macri (So., SS; Clive, IA)

- * Went hitless in St. John's doubleheader, after collecting hits in seven previous eight games (four multi-hit games)
- * 2nd on team in walks (11), 3rd in sac bunts (4), 4th in doubles (6)
- * Missed most of 2002 season due to "Tommy John" reconstructive elbow surgery
- * Nation's No. 2-rated college SS prospect for 2003 draft (per *Baseball America*)

Cody Rizzo (Fr., DH/LF; Temecula, CA)

- * Looking to end 3-for-14 slump in last five games, still scoring 7 runs with 5 RBI in those games.
- * Leads team in hit-by-pitch (9), 2nd in runs (18), 3rd in doubles (7), 4th in RBI (16) and on-base pct. (.427)

or Craig Cooper (Fr., LF/DH; Plainview, NY)

- * Hit 6-for-10 (6 R, 2 RBI) in his last three games played (dnp in SJU opener)
- * Third on team in stolen bases (6), 4th in leadoff on-base pct. (.471)

or Steve Andres (Fr., DH; Napa, CA)

- * Hit 5-for-8 (6 RBI, 5 R, HR) in last four games, after collecting just two hits and two RBI in his previous 22 at-bats (dating back to the second game at Arizona State).
- * Leads team in on-base pct. (.491), 2nd in hit-by-pitch (5), 3rd in slugging pct. (.585), 4th in batting avg. (.317)

Greg Lopez (Fr., 3B; Upper Arlington, OH)

- * Hit 6-for-12 (4 RBI, 3 R) in three games prior to St. John's series (had no ABs vs. SJU, after hit-by-pitch)

or Joe Thaman (Jr., 1B; St. Louis, MO)

- * Hit 2-for-4 with pair of 2-run singles in second game at St. John's, ending 1-for-22 slump
- * Leads team in sac. bunts (5), 3rd in 2-out RBI (7), 4th in 2-out batting (.333)

FAMILIAR FOE – Notre Dame and Western Michigan are scheduled to meet for the 124th time, making WMU the third-most common opponent in the ND baseball program's 111-year history (just behind 125 games vs. Michigan State and 130 vs. Northwestern) ... ND's other most common opponents include Wisconsin (119), Michigan (116th game slated for April 29) and Purdue (115th game played March 26) ... other longtime opponents on ND's 2003 schedule include Detroit (101st game played last week), Valparaiso (85th game last week) and Butler (81st) game slated for May 14.

ND-WMU SERIES NOTES – Notre Dame and Western Michigan have played nearly an even all-time series that includes 123 previous games, dating back to 1916 ... WMU holds a 63-59-1 series edge, with the teams totaling nearly-identical run totals in the series (WMU 637, ND 633) ... the Irish hold a 39-30 series edge in games played at ND (4-1 at Eck Stadium) ... Notre Dame advanced to the 1957 College World Series after posting three wins in the NCAA District Playoffs at WMU (including a 4-2 win over the Broncos) ... WMU won the next four NCAA meetings, eliminating ND in 1958 (5-4, at WMU) and adding two wins over the Irish in '59 (2-0 and 9-6, at ND), plus a 2-1 win in '63 (at Illinois) ... WMU won five straight in the series from '86-'91, ND four in a row from '92-'99 ... the Broncos upset the Irish in 2000 (11-7, at Kalamazoo's Sutherland Field) and '01 (7-6, at ND) but ND rallied to win last year's game, 5-4 (see recap below).

RECAPPING THE 2003 ND-WMU GAME (5-4) – **Javi Sanchez** and **Matt Bok** drove in the tying and winning runs with one out in the bottom of the 9th while the ND bullpen logged another strong outing ... ND scored the first run before seeing WMU plate four in the 3rd, despite just two solid hits in the inning. ... relievers **Drew Duff** (3.1 IP, 14 BF, 3 H, BB, 4 Ks) and **Ryan Kalita** (3 IP, 11 BF, 2 H, 3 Ks) held WMU in check over the final 6.1 IP ... ND's winning rally included three straight 1-out hits, with each batter facing two strikes ... **Andrew Bushey** sliced a 2-2 single into left and moved up on a wild pitch from Tyler Grinnell, who set down the Irish in the 9th inning of the 2002 meeting to save WMU's 7-6 win over ND ... Sanchez worked to a 2-2 count before driving an RBI double that carried over the head of LF Andy Roy and glanced high off the wall ... Bok then sent a 1-2 looper that skipped inside the leftfield line, with Sanchez scurrying home for the game-winning run ... the Irish overcame an 0-for-15 night from the No. 2-5 batters ... **Brian Stavisky** made his return to the lineup, after missing the previous nine games due to broken bones on the left side of his face.

ND CAREER STATS VS. WMU

Steve Sollmann	0-for-9, R, 2 Ks
Kris Billmaier	1-for-11, BB, 2 Ks
Javi Sanchez	1-for-4, RBI, R, 2B
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Joe Thaman	3-for-7, 2 R, K
Matt Laird	2 GP/1 GS, 0-1, 5 IP, 5 R, 7 H, 2 BB, 7 Ks, WP

WMU CAREER STATS VS. ND

Tom Fabrizio	1-for-9, R, BB, 2 Ks
Chad Tarpley	1-for-6, 3 Ks
Andy Roy	1-for-4, RBI, SB, 2 Ks, 2 E
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Steve Horn	2-for-5, RBI, R, 2 BB, K, 3 E
Mike Demetral	0-for-3, RBI, BB, 2 Ks
Adam Rosales	3-for-4, R, SB, E
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Shawn Morrison	3 GP, 1 GS, 1-0, 9.2 IP, 8 R/4 ER, 10 H, 3 BB, 5 Ks, HB, WP
Pat Misch	2 GP, 4 IP, 4 R, 6 H, BB, K
Brad Mumma	0.1 IP

EXPECTING ECK'S-ELLENC – Notre Dame's 11-0 loss to Rutgers on May 5, 2002, ended ND's team-record scoring streak at 231 games ... the Irish have gone unbeaten (15-0) at Eck Stadium since that loss, outscoring the opponents 187-79 in those games (average score of 12-5) ... ND also is 27-1 in its last 28 home games, dating back to the 7-5 loss to Pittsburgh on April 11, 2002 ... now celebrating its 10th year of play at Eck Stadium, the Irish own an all-time record of 226-49 in the facility (.822).

ON THE ROAD AGAIN – Notre Dame's trip to Omaha this week will represent the team's seventh weekend on the road in the first eight weeks of the season, followed by three straight home weekends and then the season-ending BIG EAST series at Rutgers and Virginia Tech ... after the Creighton games, the Irish are scheduled to play 12 straight home games, followed by the annual Michigan game in Grand Rapids and four more home games (before heading to Rutgers).

STRONG IN ALL AREAS – Notre Dame is the only team currently ranked among the BIG EAST's top three in team batting avg. (**2nd, .315**), ERA (**2nd, 3.54**) and fielding pct. (**1st, .968**) ... the only other team ranked in the top four of all those categories is Virginia Tech (first in ERA and fourth in both batting and fielding).

APRIL SHOWERS OF WINS – Notre Dame has dominated in April during the nine-year Paul Mainieri era (**163-36**, .819), including **43-4** (.915) in April during the past three seasons (20-2 in '01, 19-2 in '02, 4-0 in '03) ... ND's only April losses in that stretch: vs. Ball State (3-4) and Valparaiso (3-7) in '01, St. John's (3-4) and Pittsburgh (5-7) in '02.

EDWARDS NAMED BIG EAST PLAYER OF THE WEEK – Sophomore 3B/1B **Matt Edwards** (Mechanicsville, Va./Lee-Davis HS) earned BIG EAST player-of-the-week honors after leading the Irish to a 4-0 record in last week's action ... Edwards led ND in hits and batting average (9-for-14, .643), RBI (10) home runs (3), total bases (21) and slugging pct. (1.500), plus seven runs, two walks, a triple, double, stolen base and just one strikeout from his key No. 3 spot in the batting order ... he hit 6-for-9 in the doubleheader sweep at St. John's, with five RBI and a pair of booming home runs to dead-center field ... Edwards – who missed most of the 2002 season with a broken leg – heads into this week's action with a .385 season batting average and an 8-game hitting streak, plus 32 RBI in 25 games played (14 of his RBI have come with two outs) ... he is batting .436 (17-for-39) in the current 11-game winning streak, with 19 RBI and an .821 slugging percentage in that stretch (3 home runs, triple, 4 doubles).

HOME RUN BINGE – Notre Dame totaled just eight traditional home run in the first 23 games but Irish players have left the yard seven times in the last three games ... junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** hit his first "outside-the-park" home runs at St. John's (sending both opposite-field shots to right field in both games) while sophomore 3B/1B **Matt Edwards** has homered in three straight games, after hitting just one over the fences in the first 23 games ... freshman LF **Cody Rizzo** joined Edwards and Sollmann with a home run in the opener at SJU while freshman DH **Steve Andres** combined with Edwards in homering vs. Valparaiso in the last home game.

EVERYONE IN THE ACT – Notre Dame's 7-9 hitters – freshman LF **Cody Rizzo**, freshman DH **Craig Cooper** (and junior 1B **Joe Thaman** – combined to bat 6-for-11 in the second game at St. John's, adding two walks, seven RBI and seven runs scored from the bottom of the lineup.

NINE-MAN RALLY – The 9-run, 5th-inning explosion in Game 2 at St. John's was capped by nine straight Irish batters reaching base with two outs ... ND's dominance in the doubleheader was matched by its efficiency, as the Irish stranded just five baserunners in each of the two games (18 of 27 baserunners scored in the nightcap, with two erased on double plays, one on a fielder's choice and one caught stealing).

BASH BROTHERS – Junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** (leadoff) and sophomore 3B/1B **Matt Edwards** (3-hole) – who each homered in both games at SJU – have turned in strong 2003 seasons while filling key vacancies in the batting order ... Sollmann is batting .400 with a nine-game hit streak, hits in 21 of 26 games and 16 multi-hit games (five of the last six) ... Sollmann's home runs were his first "out-of-the-park" HRs this season (his 3-2 inside-the-parker sparked the 3-2 win over Eastern Illinois) ... Edwards' eight-game hit streak has pushed his batting average to .385, with 32 RBI in 25 games played (14 of his RBI have come with two outs) ... Edwards is batting 15-for-15 (.600) in the last seven games, with 19 RBI in those games (he owns 11 multi-RBI games, including four 3-RBI games and one 4-RBI effort).

WINNING STREAK STATS – The 11-game win streak matches the 4th-longest of the 9-year **Paul Mainieri** (16 in '02, 15 in '01, 13 in '98) ... the Irish are batting .349 in the winning streak while averaging 13.4 hits and 11.7 runs per nine innings during the streak (factoring solely by games shortchanges the Irish offense in seven-inning games and home wins in which ND does not bat in the 8th) ... the team's win-streak stats also include a .529 slugging pct. (7 HRs, 12 3B, 21 2Bs) and more walks by batters (49) than Ks (38) ... top hitters in the win streak include Edwards (.436, 17-for-39, 19 RBI, 10 R, 3-1-4, .821, 7 BB), the freshman duo of Cooper (.429, 12-for-28, 10 R, 3B, 4 RBI, 4 BB, 2 HBP, 4 K, 2 SB) and Grogan (.400, 14-for-35, 13 R, 4 3B, 7 RBI, 4 BB, HBP, 3 SB) and the ever-reliable Sollmann (.388, 19-for-49, 17 R, 2-1-4, 16 RBI, 3 BB, 2 K, 6 SB), staff ERA is 2.13, .220, 96/33 in 93 IP, 78 H ... the ND pitchers own a 2.13 ERA in the win streak, with a .220 opp. batting avg., 96 Ks, 33 BB and 78 hits allowed in 93 IP ... the streak has included seven double-digit hit games by the Irish (6 of last 7) and double-digit runs in last six games (13-12-15-13-11-18) ... the staff has allowed one earned run in four games during the streak, with 2 ER in 5 games, 3 in one and 5 in one ... the ND pitchers have held the opponent to seven or fewer hits in eight games during the streak.

DOUBLEHEADER DOMINATION – The **11-3, 18-3** sweep at St. John's ranks as possibly the most dominant day in Notre Dame's eight seasons of BIG EAST play, with the second game representing the **largest margin of victory** ever for the Irish in a BIG EAST game ... the Irish pounded out **27 hits** (5 HRs) while allowing just **three earned runs** ... it marked the ninth time (vs. six different teams) that ND has posted double-digit runs in both ends of a BIG EAST doubleheader (at least once every year since '97) – but just the third that has come on the road ... the **29 combined runs** are second-most among that group of nine double-digit DH sweeps (behind the 32 vs. Georgetown in a 2001 DH at Eck Stadium) ... the **23-run combined margin** in the DH also is second-best by an ND team, behind the +24 (14-0, 11-1) vs. GU in 1997 (at ND) ... here are ND's eight previous BIG EAST doubleheaders with double-digit runs: vs. Providence (10-5, 14-10, +9; 4/5/97 at ND) and Boston College (11-6, 16-3, +18; 4/6/97, at ND) on successive days, vs. GU later that in that potent '97 season (14-0, 11-1, +24; 5/3/97, at ND), vs. Pittsburgh (11-0, 12-1, +22; 4/18/98, at Three Rivers), vs. UConn (11-7, 11-8, +7; 4/3/99, at ND), vs. BC (12-1, 10-6, +15; 4/1/00, at ND), vs. GU (15-4, 17-10, +18; 4/12/01, at ND) and vs. GU (10-6, 12-3, +13; 3/30/02, at Povich Field) ... Sunday's 18-3 win matched the second-most runs ever by ND in any BIG EAST game (behind a 19-7 win over GU in '97, at ND) ... **Paul Mainieri's** BIG EAST regular-season record now stands at **128-42** (.753, best in BIG EAST history), with the Irish winning 53 of 67 all-time BIG EAST series (7 splits, 7 opp. series wins) while sweeping 40 of 65 BIG EAST doubleheaders (21 splits, just 4 opp. DH sweeps).

PITCHING AND DEFENSE – Notre Dame remains on record pace with a .968 season fielding pct., totaling just 34 errors in 26 games (1.3 Es per game, eight error-free games, nine 1-error) ... the ND bullpen has made 50 appearances and has allowed just .167 batting by the first hitters faced in each bullpen appearance (7-for-42, 5 BB, 15 Ks).

MAKING STRIDES – Here's a comparative look at ND's 26-game stats this season (20-6) compared to the 16-10 start in 2002, with the most noteworthy offensive improvements coming in batting average (10 points higher), runs (+31), triples (+11) and times hit-by-pitch (+16) ... the ND defense has made 11 fewer errors at the 26-game point while the Irish pitchers have allowed an eye-popping 99 fewer hits, with 14 more Ks but also 14 more walks:

Category	2002	2003	Improvement (Dropoff)
Record	14-10	20-6	4
One-Run Games	3-4	4-1	
Batting Average	.305	.315	.010
Runs	170	201	31
Extra-Base Hits	76	85	9
Slugging Pct.	.434	.443	.009
Home Runs	16	16	--
Triples	7	18	11
Doubles	53	51	(-2)
Walks	95	84	(-11)
Batters' Strikeouts	128	140	(-12)
Hit-By-Pitch	20	36	16
On-Base Pct.	.381	.382	.001
Stolen Bases	28	35	7
Errors	44	33	11
Fielding Pct.	.955	.968	.013
ERA	3.62	3.54	0.06
Walks	75	89	(-14)
Strikeouts Thrown	186	200	14
Opp. Batting Avg.	.268	.244	.024
Hits Allowed	231	130	99
Wild Pitches	16	23	(-7)
Hit Batters	21	18	3

BOUNCE BACK – The ND pitchers faced a challenging six-game start to the season (with a 9.00 staff ERA in those games) but the Irish hurlers have recovered from that start in impressive fashion – with a 2.11 staff ERA and .213 opponent batting average during the current 18-2 run (with 181 Ks and just 52 BB in 183.1 IP, for a 3.5 K-to-walk ratio) ... the overall team ERA now has dropped to 3.54 (better than the 3.57 posted in 2002), including a 2.70 ERA by starting pitchers (.246 opp. batting, 132 Ks, 46 BB, 126 H in 150 IP).

HOMESTAND DOMINATION – The recently-completed 7-0 homestand included a .371 team batting average and an average of 12.5 runs scored (per nine innings), with the 10 regulars each hitting .260 or higher, with nine at .300-plus, eight at .350-plus, six at .380-plus and five at .400-plus ... top hitters during the homestand included: **Steve Sollmann** (.533, 16-for-30, 12 R, 8 RBI, 3B, 3 2B, 2 BB, 0 Ks, 6-8 SB), **Matt Edwards** (.435, 10-for-23, 5 R, 14 RBI, HR, 3 2B, 5 BB), **Matt Macri** (.417, 10-for-24, 9 R, 4 RBI, 3B, 2B, 4 BB, SAC), **Steve Andres** (.417, 5-for-12, 4 R, 7 RBI, HR, 3B, 2 BB, 2 HBP), **Greg Lopez** (.400, 8-for-20, 3 R, 7 RBI, 2B, BB) and **Javi Sanchez** (.381, 8-for-21, 11 R, 2 RBI, 3 2B, 4 BB) ... the .371 team batting average included a .521 slugging pct. (2 HR, 6 3Bs, 18 2Bs) ... the ND batters totaled more walks (30) than Ks (24) in the seven home games (compared to 41 walks and 108 Ks in the previous 17 games) – with noteworthy situational hitting with runners in scoring position (.398) and in the area of leadoff batters reaching base (.463 pct.) ... the ND pitchers also had a dominating homestand, with a 2.80 staff ERA in the seven games, a .223 opponent batting average (52 hits), 70 Ks and just 24 walks in 61 IP ... the starters combined for a 1.42 ERA during the homestand.

STRONG FIRST HALF – The current 20-6 record represents one of the program's best at this point in the season– with just two 26-game starts better than the current 20-6 record: 21-4-1 in 2001 and 21-5 in '59 (also 20-6 in '28, '49, '89, '90 and 2000) ... ND's best records after 28 games (midpoint of 56-game schedule) are 23-4-1 in 2001 and 22-6 in '59, '89 and 2000 ... the quickest seasons to 30 wins have been in the landmark 2001 season (30-5-1) and 1989 (30-8).

FEARSOME FRESHMAN FIVESOME – Five freshman position players – DH/LF **Cody Rizzo**, CF **Brennan Grogan**, 3B **Greg Lopez**, DH **Steve Andres** and LF/DH **Craig Cooper** – continue to make key contributions ... those five have combined to make 87 starts while batting a combined .320 (103-for-322) ... their top contributions include 61% of ND's times hit-by-pitch (22 of 36), 50% of the triples (9 of 18) and 41% of the runs (83 of 201) – plus 36% of the RBI (65 of 180), 40% of the stolen bases (14 of 35) and 39% of the sac. bunts (9 of 23) ... they also have combined for 35% of the team's hits (103 of 293), 31% of the walks (26 of 84), 24% of the doubles (12 of 51) and four of the team's 16 home runs ... the "fearsome freshman fivesome" combined to hit .363 (33-for-91) in the recent seven-game homestand, with 28 RBI, 29 runs scored, three doubles, four triples, a home run, 10 walks, six times hit-by-pitch and four stolen bases.

RECORD BOOK WATCH – With Notre Dame's season nearing its midpoint, several individual and team records are within reach ... here are some career and season record-book projections (based on 60 games):

Junior 2B Steve Sollmann

- * .400 batting avg. (would rank 12th in ND history)
- * 44 hits, on pace for 102 and would become 3rd ND player to break 100-hit plateau (Dan Peltier had 115 in 1989, Steve Stanley 102 in 2001 and 118 in '02) ... also on pace for 259 career hits after '03 (would be 7th)
- * 32 runs, on pace for 74 (would best his brother Scott's '95 total of 73 for 7th in ND record book) ... also on pace for 179 career runs at end of '03 (would crack ND top-10)
- * 17 stolen bases, on pace for 39 (could join his brother, 52 in '96, as only ND players with 40-plus) ... already 7th in ND history with 46 SBs, on pace for 68 (5th)
- * .369 career batting avg. would rank 5th in ND history, behind his brother's .372
- * His nine career triples (3 in '03) are three shy of ND top-10 (five back of 3rd)
- * .730 career stolen-base pct. (46-of-63) ranks 10th
- * Already 8th in career fielding assists (409), on pace for 525 (4th)

Freshman CF Brennan Grogan

- * His 5 triples project out to 11 for the season, which would match Scott Sollmann's ND record ('95)
- * 5 sacrifice bunts, on pace for 12 (two shy of ND record held by three players)

Sophomore 3B/1B Matt Edwards

- * 32 RBI, on pace for 74 and shot at ND top-10 (74 would tie for 6th; last ND player with 70-plus RBI was Mike Amrhein's 71 in 1997)

Senior RF Kris Billmaier

- * On pace for 249 at-bats and 744 in his career (would rank 10th in ND history)

Freshman DH/OF Cody Rizzo

- * 11 times hit-by-pitch on pace for 25, well past the ND record of 15 (by Eric Danapilis, in '93)

Senior RHP J.P. Gagne

- * 12 appearances, on pace for 28 (would match his '02 total and tie for 4th in ND record book) ... also on pace for 92 career appearances, which would tie Chris Michalak's ND record (now 3rd at 76, behind Aaron Heilman's 83)
- * On pace for 53-inning season, which would push his career total to 291 (8th in ND history; now 9th at 263)
- * On pace for 5-win season and 26 career wins (would rank 8th, now 10th with 23)
- * 4 saves on pace for 9 (two shy of John Corbin's record 11) ... also on pace for 15 career saves (2nd to Corbin's 20; now 5th with 10)
- * On pace for 42 Ks and 202 in his career (would rank 9th)
- * His career walk avg. of 2.38 BB per 9 IP would rank 9th in ND record book

Sophomore RHP John Axford

- * 2.31 ERA would tie for 21st (13th-best since '69)
- * 5-0 record in six starts, on pace for possible 13-win season (Aaron Heilman went 15-0 in '01, Tom Price 14-5 in '94) ... only five ND pitchers ever have started a season at least 9-0
- * .222 opp. batting avg. would rank 8th in ND record book (since '91)
- * 35 strikeouts on pace for 88 (would rank 12th)

Sophomore RHP Chris Niesel

- * .225 opp. batting avg. would rank 10th in ND record book (since '91)
- * 45 strikeouts on pace for 99 (would rank 6th)
- * Walk average of 1.55/9 IP would rank 9th ... his 1.97 career walk avg. is 5th (best since '94)
- * 5.63 K-to-walk ratio would rank 4th ... his 4.12 career K-to-BB ratio (107/26) is ahead of Alan Walania's ND record (4.00)

Senior RHP Ryan Kalita

- * .208 opp. batting avg. would rank 7th in ND record book (since '91)
- * 2.83 career ERA would rank 6th in ND history (3rd-best since 1970)
- * 11-0 career record, could become 5th ND pitcher to win 14 straight ... needs five more decisions to qualify for career win pct. list

Senior RHP Brandon Vilorio

- * Yet to walk a batter in 10.2 IP (top ratio in ND record book is Tom Price's 0.49 BB per 9 IP, in '94)
- * 2.52 career ERA would rank 4th in ND history (2nd since 1961, behind Aaron Heilman's 2.49)
- * His career walk avg. of 1.39 BB per 9 IP is below the standing ND record (1.64, by Alan Walania)

Team

- * 11.27 hits per game, would rank 2nd behind the 1997 team (11.35)
- * 18 triples, on pace for 42 (1st, record is 41 in '94)
- * 36 times hit-by-pitch, on pace for 83 (1st; record is 75 in '93)
- * 23 sac. bunts, on pace for 53 (3rd)
- * 200 strikeouts thrown, on pace for 462 (3rd, record is 483 in '02)
- * .968 fielding pct. ahead of ND record .965 ('82, '92, '00)

MAINIERI HITS WIN NO. 700 – Ninth-year ND head coach **Paul Mainieri** – now in his 21st overall season – picked up his 700th career coaching victory in the 6-2 series-opening win over Georgetown on Sat., March 29, just 135 games removed from his 600th win (ND's 99 combined wins in '01 and '02 were third-most in nation, behind Florida State's 107 and South Carolina's 106) ... Mainieri's 706-427-1 career record (.683) includes 180-121 at St. Thomas ('83-'88), 152-158 at Air Force ('89-'94) and 374-148-1 (.716) at ND ('95-'03) ... his ND career includes five BIG EAST titles and five NCAA trips with the Irish ('96, '99-'02), the program's first No. 1 ranking in 2001 and first CWS trip since '57 (in '02) ... he was the nation's only coach to repeat as ABCA regional coach of the year (Midwest), in 2002, and his squads have extended ND's streak of seasons with 40-plus wins to 14 (nation's 4th-longest active streak) ... 31 of his ND players have moved on to pro ball, including 12 drafted in the first 10 rounds and pair of first-round pitchers (Brad Lidge in '98, Aaron Heilman in '01) ... every ND player in the Mainieri era who has completed his eligibility with the Irish has graduated from Notre Dame (46 of 46) while the eight who were signed after their junior seasons have returned to complete or near completion of their graduation requirements (including two-time Academic All-American Brian Stavisky) ... Mainieri owns the best BIG EAST winning pct. in the conference's history (.753, 128-42) ... in 67 BIG EAST series spanning eight-plus seasons, the Irish have won 53 with seven splits and just seven series wins by the opponent (just two of them being 3-game sweeps) ... the Irish have been swept just four times in 65 all-time BIG EAST doubleheaders (40 ND sweeps, 21 splits).

Inside The Notre Dame Bullpen

Pitcher	ERA	W-L	Rel. GP	SV	IP	H (Avg., HR)	R/ER	K/BB	WP	HBP	Inher.	R's Sc.	1st Batters
Viloria	0.00	1-0	8	1	10.2	7 (.184, 0)	1/0	7/0	0	0	0-of-5	1-for-7, 3 K	
Arminio	0.00	0-0	1	0	2.0	0 (.000, 0)	0/0	1/0	0	0	0	0-for-1	
Thornton	1.23	0-0	3	0	7.1	6 (.250, 0)	2/1	1/4	0	2	1-of-3	1-for-1, BB, HB	
Gagne	3.52	2-3	12	4	21.0	24 (.267, 2)	14/9	18/7	1	0	0-of-3	3-for-11, 2 K	
Jones	4.50	1-0	4	0	6.0	7 (.280, 0)	4/3	7/1	0	0	0	0-for-4	
Vergara	7.36	0-0	5	0	11.0	11 (.250, 2)	11/9	8/9	2	3	0	0-for-5, 3 K	
Kalita	8.10	0-0	1	0	3.1	6 (.545, 0)	3/3	0/3	0	1	0	BB	
Laird	8.31	0-0	9	0	8.2	7 (.219, 1)	8/8	13/ 11	3	1	1-of-1	1-for-7, 4 K, 2 BB	
Wilkins	9.00	0-0	3	0	4.0	10 (.500, 1)	6/4	5/1	0	0	0	1-for-3, K	
Doherty	13.50	0-0	3	0	3.1	6 (.400, 0)	5/5	6/4	1	1	0-of-1	0-for-2, K, BB	
Bickford	18.00	0-0	1	0	2.0	4 (.364, 0)	4/4	2/3	1	0	0	0-for-1, K	
Totals	5.09	4-3	50	5	81.1	88 (.278, 6)	58/46	68/43	8	8	2-of-13	7-for-42 (.167) 5 BB, 15 K	

HAWAII 0.0 – Senior RHP **Brandon Viloria** (Wailuku, Hawaii) has logged eight solid relief outings in 2003, allowing just an unearned run, seven hits (.184 opp. batting) and no walks, wild pitches or hit batters in 10.2 innings of work ... Viloria also has allowed just 1-of-10 leadoff batters to reach base and teams are hitting just 1-for-12 (.083) vs. him with runners on base.

BORN LEADERS – One of ND's more noteworthy situational stats is a .444 on-base pct. for batters leading off an inning ... leadoff hitter **Steve Sollmann** (.615) owns the team's best leadoff OB pct., with other three others above .470: freshman DH/LF **Cody Rizzo** (.593), senior RF **Kris Billmaier** (.500) and freshman LF/DH **Craig Cooper** (.471).

TWO-OUT TERRORS – Freshman CF **Brennan Grogan** (.429) and sophomore 3B/1B **Matt Edwards** (.412) own ND's top 2-out batting averages, with Edwards totaling a team-best 14 RBI with two outs (junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** has 10).

HITTING IN THE CLUTCH – Junior 2B **Steve Sollmann** and sophomore 3B/1B **Matt Edwards** filled the two biggest holes in the ND batting order (Sollmann moved up from the 2-hole to leadoff while Edwards has settled in at the 3-hole) and each has proven to be a clutch hitter ... Edwards leads the team with a .487 batting avg. with runners in scoring position (102 points above his overall average) while Sollmann is hitting .417 with RBI chances (.400 overall).

SECOND-STRIKE WEAPON – Notre Dame's offense has totaled just 10 runs and a .226 team batting average in the first inning this season but the Irish have erupted for 34 runs and .342 team batting in the second inning ... ND has been outscored 15-10 in the first inning but quickly has turned the tables in the second for a 34-4 scoring edge (including a 20-0 second-inning scoring edge in the last five games) ... here's a look at ND's offense, by inning:

1st	10 runs, .226 batting	2nd	34 runs, .342 batting	3rd	33 runs, .369 batting
4th	23 runs, .264 batting	5th	29 runs, .390 batting	6th	32 runs, .366 batting
7th	14 runs, .283 batting	8th	18 runs, .309 batting	9th	5 runs, .196 batting
Ex. Inn.	2 runs, .282 batting				

Here's a look at the runs allowed, by inning:

1st	15 runs, 4.85 ERA	2nd	4 runs, 1.38 ERA	3rd	18 runs, 3.81 ERA
4th	4 runs, 0.69 ERA	5th	10 runs, 2.08 ERA	6th	21 runs, 4.85 ERA
7th	28 runs, 7.96 ERA	8th	14 runs, 4.50 ERA	9th	2 runs, 1.00 ERA
Ex. Inn.	4 runs, 3.86 ERA				

Scott Bickford – Career Stats

Year	ERA	W-L	GP/GS	CG	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	2B-3B-HR	BF/B/Avg	WP	HB
2002	4.35	1-0	6/0	0	1	10.1	10	5	5	1	12	0-0-1	42/.250	0	1
2003	18.00	0-0	1/0	0	0	2.0	4	4	4	3	2	1-0-0	14/.364	1	0
Totals	6.57	1-0	7/0	0	1	12.1	14	9	9	4	14	1-0-1	56/.275	1	1

J.P. Gagne	W-L	GP/GS	CG	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	2B-3B-HR	BF/B/Avg	WP	HB	
2000	4.46	7-1	19/13	0	0	72.2	98	40	36	25	44	0-0-6	.333	4	2
2001	5.35	5-5	17/13	1	0	70.2	79	47	42	21	47	17-2-6	.280	1	5
2002	3.14	9-4	28/7	1	6	94.2	86	40	33	16	69	23-1-7	390/.245	4	12
2003	3.52	2-3	12/0	0	4	23.0	24	14	9	7	18	3-0-2	99/.267	1	0
Totals	4.14	23-13	76/33	2	10	261.0	287	141	120	69	178	43-3-21	489/.282	10	19

Tyler Jones	W-L	GP/GS	CG	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	2B-3B-HR	BF/B/Avg	WP	HB	
2002	4.00	1-0	4/1	0	1	9.0	9	5	4	9	6	0-0-0	46/.243	1	0
2003	4.50	1-0	4/0	0	0	6.0	7	4	3	1	7	1-0-0	26/.28	0	0
Totals	4.20	2-0	8/1	0	1	15.0	16	9	7	10	13	1-0-0	72/.258	1	0

Matt Laird	W-L	GP/GS	CG	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	2B-3B-HR	BF/B/Avg	WP	HB	
2000	3.83	5-2	15/9	0	0	47.0	55	32	20	15	34	0-0-2	.284	6	9
2001	3.09	5-1	22/0	0	4	32.0	23	11	11	15	28	5-0-1	.209	4	6
2002	5.73	0-0	12/0	0	1	11.0	14	9	7	9	9	0-1-0	58/.292	3	0
2003	8.31	0-0	9/0	0	0	8.2	7	8	8	11	13	1-0-1	45/.219	3	1
Totals	4.20	10-3	58/9	0	5	98.2	99	60	46	50	84	6-1-4	.258	16	16

Brandon Vilorio	W-L	GP/GS	CG	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	2B-3B-HR	BF/B/Avg	WP	HB	
2000	3.18	0-0	11/1	0	0	17.0	19	6	6	1	15	0-0-0	.284	1	1
2001	3.32	3-1	12/0	0	2	21.2	21	10	8	5	8	7-0-1	.241	0	2
2002	2.45	2-1	16/0	0	3	22.0	16	10	6	5	8	0-1-1	88/.203	0	1
2003	0.00	1-0	8/0	0	1	10.2	7	1	0	0	7	2-0-0	38/.184	0	0
Totals	2.52	6-2	47/1	0	6	71.1	63	27	20	11	38	9-1-2	.232	1	4

Kris Billmaier – Career Stats

Yr.	Avg.	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)
'00	.354	33/21	82	18	29	3-0-4	19	44/.537	8	1	10	0	.413	1	0	0-2	0 (.000)
'01	.257	56/55	183	34	47	9-0-3	37	65/.355	30	9	15	0	.382	3	2	4-6	2 (.970)
'02	.313	65/62	230	34	72	8-1-3	41	91/.396	14	7	33	4	.369	1	11	2-2	8 (.927)
'03	.315	26/26	108	19	34	8-1-3	21	53/.491	7	3	9	3	.361	4	1	0-0	1.000
Tot.	.302	180/164	603	105	182	28-2-13	118	253/.420	59	20	67	7	.378	9	14	6-10	10 (.955)

M. Edwards	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)	
'02	.290	9/8	31	3	9	1-0-0	4	10/.323	3	1	6	1	.371	0	0	1-1	6 (.806)
'03	.385	25/25	96	19	37	8-1-4	32	59/.615	10	3	16	3	.450	2	0	1-4	4 (.959)
Tot.	.362	34/33	127	22	46	9-1-4	36	69/.543	13	4	22	4	.432	2	0	2-5	10 (.926)

Matt Macri	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)	
'02	.206	17/16	68	10	14	3-0-1	13	20/.294	7	0	24	0	.273	2	0	1-2	1.000
'03	.250	25/25	92	18	23	6-2-1	12	36/.391	11	2	16	0	.343	0	4	1-1	9 (.922)
Tot.	.231	42/41	160	28	37	9-2-2	25	56/.350	18	2	40	0	.313	2	4	2-3	9 (.929)

J. Sanchez	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)	
'01	.000	9/2	13	0	0	0-0-0	0	0/.000	1	0	2	0	.071	0	0	0-0	1 (.750)
'02	.281	66/65	231	50	65	7-3-5	29	93/.403	24	5	32	3	.360	1	8	1-1	28 (.902)
'03	.316	25/25	95	20	30	6-1-1	12	41/.432	11	3	6	1	.400	1	0	2-2	5 (.973)
Tot.	.280	100/92	339	70	95	13-4-6	41	134/.395	36	8	40	4	.361	2	8	3-3	34 (.929)

S. Sollmann	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)	
'01	.362	61/61	221	52	80	9-2-5	36	108/.489	30	4	29	0	.440	4	6	23-34	21 (.928)
'02	.362	59/57	213	53	77	8-4-2	47	99/.465	22	3	18	3	.420	5	6	6-6	8 (.969)
'03	.400	26/26	110	32	44	6-3-3	24	65/.591	12	0	8	1	.459	0	3	17-23	4 (.970)
Tot.	.369	146/144	544	137	201	23-9-10	107	272/.500	64	7	55	4	.436	9	15	46-63	33 (.952)

Joe Thaman	GP/GS	AB	R	H	2B-3B-HR	RBI	TB/SLG	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	E (FLD%)	
'01	.284	61/60	208	29	59	15-1-2	25	82/.394	10	2	31	0	.318	3	3	1-3	6 (.990)
'02	.272	62/58	180	43	49	6-0-6	33	73/.406	24	5	40	3	.370	2	13	2-5	9 (.984)
'03	.197	23/16	61	4	12	3-1-0	12	17/.279	4	1	19	2	.258	0	5	0-0	1 (.995)
Tot.	.267	146/134	449	76	120	24-2-8	70	172/.383	38	8	90	5	.332	5	21	3-8	16 (.988)