



2001 Notre Dame Softball



University of Notre Dame Sports Information • February 28, 2001 • Contact: Alan Wasielewski, 219-631-7516, Fax: 219-631-7941

2001 Schedule			
February			
16-18 Fri.-Sun. at Holiday Inn Invitational (Tampa, Fla.)			
16	Fri.	vs. Maryland	W, 4-1
16	Fri.	vs. South Florida	W, 5-3
17	Sat.	vs. #4 Washington	W, 3-2
17	Sat.	vs. Hofstra	W, 8-1
18	Sun.	vs. #18 S.Carolina	W, 1-0
23-25 Fri.-Sun. at Lady Razorback Invitational (Fayetteville, Ark.)			
23	Fri.	vs. Texas Tech	W, 4-0
24	Sat.	vs. Arkansas	W, 4-3
24	Sat.	vs. Maine	W, 8-0 (5)
25	Sun.	vs. Arkansas	L, 0-2
March			
2-4 Fri.-Sun. at Frost Tournament (Chattanooga, Tenn.)			
2	Fri.	vs. Jacksonville St.	2:00 p.m.
2	Fri.	vs. Tenn.-Chatt.	6:00 p.m.
3	Sat.	vs. Alabama-Birm.	2:00 p.m.
3	Sat.	vs. Tenn.-Chatt.	6:00 p.m.
4	Sun.	vs. Alabama-Birm.	10:00 a.m.
4	Sun.	vs. Jacksonville St.	12:00 p.m.
11	Sun.	at Cal St. North (Northridge, Calif.)	12:00 p.m.
13	Tues.	at Long Beach State (Long Beach, Calif.)	5:00 p.m.
15-16 Th.-Fri. Kia Klassic First Round (Fullerton, Calif.)			
15	Thurs.	vs. Utah State	9:00 a.m.
15	Thurs.	vs. #8 Fresno State	1:00 p.m.
16	Fri.	vs. #3 Oklahoma	11:00 a.m.
16-18 Fri.-Sun. Kia Klassic Championship play			
27	Tues.	Western Michigan	4:00 p.m.
28	Wend.	Valparaiso	4:00 p.m.
31	Sat.	*St. John's	11:00 a.m.
April			
1	Sun.	*Seton Hall	11:00 a.m.
3	Tues.	at Purdue	2:00 p.m.
7	Sat.	*at Connecticut	12:00 p.m.
8	Sun.	*at Syracuse	11:00 a.m.
11	Wend.	Bowling Green	3:30 p.m.
12	Thurs.	Loyola (Chicago)	4:00 p.m.
14	Sat.	*Pittsburgh	11:00 a.m.
17	Tues.	at Indiana State	2:00 p.m.
19	Thurs.	at #13 DePaul	4:30 p.m.
21	Sat.	*at Virginia Tech	11:00 a.m.
24	Tues.	at Illinois-Chicago	5:30 p.m.
25	Wend.	Toledo	4:00 p.m.
28	Sat.	*Boston College	11:00 a.m.
29	Sun.	*Providence	11:00 a.m.
May			
4	Fri.	*at Villanova	12:00 p.m.
5	Sat.	*at Rutgers	10:30 a.m.
10-12	Th.-Sat.	BIG EAST Championship	
17-20	Th.-Sat.	NCAA Regionals	
24-28	Th.-Mon.	College World Series	

All home games (indicated in bold) played at Ivy Field.

* - indicates BIG EAST Conference game

Who: Notre Dame, Alabama-Birmingham, Jacksonville State and UT-Chattanooga

What: The 2001 Frost Tournament

Where: Chattanooga, Tenn.

When: Friday, Mar. 2 – Sunday, Mar. 4

#15 Notre Dame vs. Jacksonville State, Friday, Mar. 2, 2:00 p.m.

#15 Notre Dame vs. UT-Chattanooga, Friday, Mar. 2, 6:00 p.m.

#15 Notre Dame vs. UA-Birmingham, Saturday, Mar. 3, 2:00 p.m.

#15 Notre Dame vs. UT-Chattanooga, Saturday, Mar. 3, 6:00 p.m.

#15 Notre Dame vs. UA-Birmingham, Sunday, Mar. 4, 10:00 a.m.

#15 Notre Dame vs. Jacksonville State, Sunday, Mar. 4, 12:00 p.m.

Notre Dame continues early-season travels with a trip to Chattanooga, Tenn.: The 15th-ranked Notre Dame softball team continues the 2001 season this weekend (Mar. 2-4) at the Frost Tournament in Chattanooga, Tenn., hosted the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga.

Notre Dame improved its record to 8-1 last weekend (Feb. 23-25) at the Morning News Invitational in Fayetteville, Ark.

The Frost Tournament will be a round-robin formatted event, as the Irish will play each participating team twice. Notre Dame will face Jacksonville State and UT-Chattanooga on Friday, followed by matchups with Alabama-Birmingham and UT-Chattanooga on Saturday. The schedule wraps up on Sunday as Notre Dame faces Alabama-Birmingham and Jacksonville State.

Irish drop a spot in USA Today/NFCA Top 25: Notre Dame dropped one notch to 15th in the latest USA Today/NFCA Top 25 poll, released Feb. 28. The team is now 8-1 and looking forward to the Frost Tournament in Chattanooga, Tenn., this weekend.

Last week the Irish were ranked 14th, the highest ranking the team had reached in school history. Prior to the 2001 season, the highest Notre Dame had climbed in the poll was 17th (the 2001 Preseason Top 25 and the 1994 Preseason Top 25).

Notre Dame sweeps the first BIG EAST softball weekly awards announcement: The 14th-ranked University of Notre Dame softball team, off to the its best start ever with a 8-1 record in 2001, had two players recognized by the BIG EAST Conference for their performances last weekend.

Junior **Jenny Kreich (Indianapolis, Ind.)** was named the BIG EAST Player-of-the-Week after posting six hits in four games at the Morning News Invitational in Fayetteville, Ark., last weekend (Feb. 23-25). In an 8-0 victory over Maine on Saturday, Feb. 24, Kreich was three-for-three, including a game-ending three-run triple. She finished the tournament with a .545 batting average (six-for-11) and was named to the Morning News Invitational all-tournament team.

Senior All-American **Jen Sharron (Agoura Hills, Calif.)**, a three-time BIG EAST Pitcher-of-the-Year, began the 2001 season in traditional style by capturing the first BIG EAST Pitcher-of-the-Week award. She allowed just one earned run in two starts

last weekend, including a one-hit shutout victory against Texas Tech on Friday. That 4-0 win over the Red Raiders included a seven-hour rain delay after the third inning. She joined Kreich and Irish catcher **Jarrah Myers (Carbondale, Kan.)** on the Morning News Invitational all-tournament team. She currently boasts a 0.55 ERA this season with 40 strikeouts.

Sharron also did some damage at the plate over the weekend. With the score tied at 1-1 in the bottom of the fifth against Arkansas on Saturday night, Sharron launched a 0-2 pitch far over the centerfield fence to give her team a three-run lead. Notre Dame eventually won the game 4-3.

Kriech dominates competition over the first two weekends of the season: Junior **Jenny Kriech** started off the season by splitting tournament MVP honors with teammate Lizzy Lemire at the Holiday Inn Invitational (Feb. 16-18) and earning a spot on the Morning News Invitational (Feb. 23-25) all-tournament team.

The Irish lead-off hitter has 14 hits in nine games this season, including the following dramatic moments:

- A game-winning single up the middle against #4 Washington on Feb. 17.

- A game-tying single against Arkansas (Feb. 24) in the top of the fifth, setting up the table for teammate Jen Sharron's game-winning home run and Kriech scoring the eventual game-winning run.

- A walk-off three-run triple in the bottom of the fifth against Maine (Feb. 24) that ended the game on collegiate softball's eight-run rule.

Kriech leads the team with a .452 batting average with eight RBI and six runs scored so far in 2001. She also has three stolen bases.

Morning News Invitational Recap: Notre Dame won three out of four games in the waterlogged Morning News Invitational in Fayetteville, Ark., last weekend (Feb. 23-25). The Irish began the weekend with a 4-0 victory over Texas Tech, followed by wins over Arkansas (4-3) and Maine (8-0). Arkansas handed Notre Dame its first loss of the year on Sunday, Feb. 25, 2-0.

The Irish were originally scheduled to play a doubleheader against each team over the course of the invitational, but two days dominated by inclement weather forced the tournament organizers to adjust the format.

2001 Notre Dame Softball Roster

No.	Name	Year	Pos.	Ht.	B/T	Birthdate	Hometown (High School)
2	***Melanie Alkire (C)	Sr.	SS/RHP	5-8	R/R	10-6-79	Union City, CA (James Logan)
4	***Danielle Klayman (C)	Sr.	OF	5-7	L/L	9-17-79	San Diego, CA (La Jolla)
5	**Kas Hoag	Jr.	UT/DP	5-5	L/R	6-13-80	Wallingford, CT (Lyman Hall)
7	Jessica Sharron	So.	RHP	5-8	R/R	10-12-81	Agoura Hills, CA (Thousand Oaks)
8	Kristin Schmidt	Fr.	RHP	5-9	R/R	4-3-82	Houston, TX (North Shore Senior)
9	***Jen Sharron (C)	Sr.	LHP	5-9	L/L	9-14-79	Agoura Hills, CA (Thousand Oaks)
10	*Alexis Madrid	So.	2B/SS	5-1	L/R	10-17-81	Temecula, CA (Temecula)
11	**Jenny Kriech	Jr.	OF	5-7	L/L	9-8-80	Indianapolis, IN (Perry Meridian)
16	***Lizzy Lemire (C)	Sr.	OF	5-9	R/R	10-10-79	Irvine, CA (Woodbridge)
15	Nicole deFau	Fr.	IF/OF	5-9	R/R	10-5-82	Southington, CT (Southington)
17	Sarah Kirkman	Sr.	OF/DP	5-11	R/R	11-2-78	Kokomo, IN (Northwestern)
18	*Andria Bledsoe	So.	3B/SS	5-7	R/R	8-4-81	Higley, AZ (Highland)
19	Chantal DeAlcuaz	Fr.	C	5-9	R/R	4-29-82	Modesto, CA (Central Catholic)
20	*Lisa Mattison	So.	1B/C/DP	5-10	R/R	4-26-81	Granger, IN (Penn)
22	**Jarrah Myers	Jr.	C	5-9	R/R	4-22-80	Carbondale, KS (Santa Fe Trail)
33	*Andrea Loman	So.	1B/3B	5-10	R/R	11-25-81	Riverside, CA (Poly)

* - indicates monograms won
 (C) - indicates 2001 team captains
Head Coach: Liz Miller (Western Michigan, '69), 331-150 (.688) record at Notre Dame (Eight years)
Associate Head Coach: Deanna Gumpf (Nebraska '92)
Assistant Coach: Traci Conrad (Michigan '99)
Volunteer Assistant Coach: John Gumpf (Cal St. San Bernardino '97)
Trainer: Chantal Porter (Iowa State '94)
Team Managers: Maureen Guilfoyle, Sean Coary

Pronunciation Guide

Melanie *Alkire* Al-KYE-er
 Chantal *DeAlcuaz* Deh-All-quez
 Nicole *deFau* duh-FOE
 Andria Bledsoe An-DREE-a
 Kas *Hoag*..... HOE-g
 Jennifer *Kriech* Creek
 Lizzy *Lemire* Lah-MEER
 Andrea Loman An-DRAY-a

Notre Dame Softball Quick Facts

All-Time Record: 458-235-2
 Extra-Innings Record: 29-31-2
 Overall Winning Seasons: 12
 Overall Losing Seasons: 0
 2000 Record: 47-14
 Home: 14-4
 Away: 14-2
 Neutral: 19-8
 BIG EAST: 14-2 (1st)
 Starters Returning/Lost: 9/0
 Monogram Winners
 Returning/Lost: 11/3

Notre Dame took the field on Friday, Feb. 23, at 10:00 a.m. against Texas Tech in the first game of the invitational. The teams played three scoreless innings before play was suspended due to heavy rain showers. Both teams were able to muster just one hit against the opposing pitcher before the rain delay.

It took over seven hours for the weather to clear enough for the teams to return to competition. Notre Dame starting pitcher **Jen Sharron** returned to strikeout four of the first six batters she faced after the break. Sharron would eventually pitch a complete-game one-hit shutout.

Notre Dame scored all four of its runs in the top of the sixth inning on two Red Raider errors. Jenny Kriech drew a walk and stole second after **Kas Hoag** (Wallingford, Conn.) popped up. **Melanie Alkire** (Union City, Calif.) reached on an error by Texas Tech shortstop Rebecca Eimen (who transferred to the Red Raiders after playing for Notre Dame in 1999 and 2000) that also allowed Kriech to score.

Jarrah Myers (Carbondale, Kan.) followed with a single and advanced to second base on the throw, giving the Irish runners on second and third with one out. **Lizzy Lemire** (Irvine, Calif.) then hit a sharp grounder to Eimen at short which was thrown into leftfield. Myers and **Nicole deFau** (who was inserted as a pinch-runner for Alkire) scored and Lemire advanced to second. **Danielle Klayman** (San Diego, Calif.) followed with a single up the middle, knocking in Lemire with Notre Dame's last run of the game.

Rain delayed competition on the second day of the invitational, pushing the start time for Notre Dame's matchup with Arkansas back to 7 p.m. local time (8 p.m. in South Bend, Ind.).

Sharron took the mound once again for the Irish and scattered eight hits in six inning of work (allowing just one earned run).

Arkansas struck first in the top of the third inning. With one out, Tiffany Johnson, a traditional

slap-hitter, drove a Sharron pitch deep into centerfield for a double. She moved to third base when Lauren Hendrix singled to leftfield. Sharron then committed her first wild pitch of the season, allowing Johnson to score the first run of the game.

The Irish bats remained silent until the bottom of the fifth inning. With one out, Klayman posted a bunt single, followed by an **Andria Bledsoe** (Higley, Ariz.) line out. **Alexis Madrid** (Temecula, Calif.) followed with a single, allowing Klayman to move to second and score on Kriech's RBI single.

Sharron then came to bat for the first time in the game (dp deFau had taken the previous two at bats in the second spot in the lineup). After falling behind 0-2, Sharron drilled a home run into a stiff wind, giving her team a 4-1 lead.

Arkansas came right back in the top of the sixth to score two unearned runs on a Sharron throwing error to first base. **Kristin Schmidt** (Houston, Texas) pitched the seventh inning for the first save of her career and Notre Dame prevailed 4-3.

The Irish would face Maine in the next game of the tournament, which began at 10:45 local time (11:45 in South Bend). Notre Dame pounded out 11 hits in five innings, winning the game 8-0 in the bottom of the fifth on a three-run walk-off triple by Kriech. Schmidt picked up her third victory of the year, giving up just three hits and striking out 11 in five innings of work.

In the final game of the tournament for the Irish, Notre Dame suffered its first loss of the year 2-0 to Arkansas. Schmidt surrendered nine hits and two runs (one earned) against the Lady Razorbacks. The Irish hit the ball hard throughout the game but did not receive any breaks. **Andrea Loman** (Riverside, Calif.) scorched a liner up the middle in the fifth inning that ricocheted off the pitcher straight to the shortstop, who threw Loman out a first base.

Arkansas scored one of their runs on a very close fair-ball call on a line drive down the leftfield line and a throwing error by Irish catcher Jarrah Myers.

Notre Dame finished with five hits and was shut out for the first time this season and only the second time in the last two years.

Lemire has a great first weekend: Senior captain **Lizzy Lemire** made her presence known in the lineup at the Holiday Inn Invitational (Feb. 16-18). The Irish leftfielder posted six hits in five games, including three hits vs. Hofstra. She also had a double and a triple, scored two runs and notched two RBI over the course of the tournament.

Her solid play earned her co-MVP honors of the tournament with teammate **Jenny Kriech**.

Hitting the long ball: Three Irish players have blasted home runs over the first two weeks of the season. **Andria Bledsoe** hit her first career round-tripper against South Florida while **Andrea Loman** added a solo shot against #4 Washington. **Jen Sharron** joined the home run club with a three-run shot in the fifth inning vs. Arkansas (Feb. 24). It was Sharron's third career home run.

Three bases are better than two: Notre Dame set the team record for triples last season with 18 and the Irish seem to have their minds set on exceeding that mark this year.

Jarrah Myers, Lizzy Lemire, Andria Bledsoe and **Jenny Kriech** have all hit triples this season. It was Lemire's eighth career three-bagger, while Myers and Bledsoe both posted their fourth career triples. Kriech has moved into fourth place on the all-time list for career triples with nine. Katie Marten ('94-'97) tops the list with 13.

Schmidt gives the Irish a solid one-two starting rotation: The success of freshman RHP **Kristin Schmidt** (Houston, Texas) has put the Irish coaching staff in the enviable position of possessing two quality starting pitchers for the 2001 season.

Schmidt is 3-1 in four starts this season with a 1.35 ERA. She has struck out 30 and pitched a complete-game three-hit shutout in Notre Dame's 8-0 five-inning victory over Maine. The freshman hurler struck out 11 Maine batters in just five innings of

USA Today/NFCA Top 25 (as of Feb. 28, 2001)

School	Record	Points	LW
1. UCLA	19-0	668	1
2. Arizona	20-0	654	2
3. Alabama	14-0	597	4
4. California	11-0	584	5
5. Oklahoma	12-2	577	6
6. Stanford	16-1-1	519	9
7. Fresno State	8-2	452	8
8. LSU	13-4	440	6
9. Arizona State	13-4	433	6
10. Cal St. Fullerton	14-5	384	11
11. DePaul	7-1-1	373	13
12. Washington	10-6	359	10
13. Iowa	4-1	345	12
14. Oregon State	15-3-1	301	16
15. NOTRE DAME	8-1	304	14
16. South Carolina	11-7-1	291	19
17. Nebraska	7-7	240	15
18. Michigan	5-6	218	18
19. Florida State	15-3	196	16
20. Texas A&M	13-4	135	21
21. Southern Miss.	10-5	114	23
22. Oregon	14-8	100	20
23. Baylor	19-4	68	NR
24. Wisconsin	7-7	47	NR
25. SW Texas St.	12-4	43	NR

Others receiving votes: Florida International (38), North Carolina (35), Florida State (31), Kansas (26), Florida Atlantic (25), Louisiana-Lafayette (25), Pacific (14), Massachusetts (14), Utah (12), New Mexico (12), Northwestern (11), Cal. St. Northridge (9), Louisiana-Monroe (8), Minnesota (6), Purdue (4).

Bold indicates 2001 Notre Dame opponents.
LY - ranking at the end of the 2000 season

Notre Dame Sports Information

Publicity for Notre Dame softball is coordinated by sports information publicity assistant Alan Wasielewski.

Photographs, statistics and feature ideas are available by contacting Wasielewski at (219) 631-7516 or via e-mail at Wasielewski.3@nd.edu.

Requests to interview student-athletes must be arranged through the SID office and should be made at least 24 hours in advance. Media may contact coach Liz Miller directly on weekdays at (219) 631-6167. Credentials for home games can be obtained by calling Wasielewski.

Statistics, results and weekly releases also are readily available on Notre Dame's official athletic site, www.und.com.

work.

Irish picked to repeat as BIG EAST champs: Notre Dame, which finished last season ranked 24th in the country, returns all nine starters from its 2000 BIG EAST Championship title team last year. Led by captains **Melanie Alkire**, **Danielle Klayman**, **Lizzy Lemire** and **Jen Sharron**, the Irish have been picked to repeat as BIG EAST champions by a vote from

the league's coaches.

The 2001 BIG EAST Coaches Preseason Poll:

1. Notre Dame, 100 pts.
2. Connecticut, 91 pts.
3. Seton Hall, 68 pts.
Virginia Tech, 68 pts.
5. Boston College, 64 pts.
6. Villanova, 55 pts.
7. Syracuse, 50 pts.
8. St. John's, 43 pts.
9. Rutgers, 29 pts.
10. Pittsburgh, 25 pts.
11. Providence, 12 pts.

The Irish finished with a 14-2 record in BIG EAST competition last season and swept through the BIG EAST Championship in three games. Notre Dame outscored Boston College (5-2) and Connecticut (5-0, 7-0) 17-2 to earn its third consecutive conference championship title.

All-Americans return: Seniors **Melanie Alkire** and **Jen Sharron** became Notre Dame's first All-Americans since 1996 by earning NFCA second-team All-American honors last year.

Katie Marten ('94-'97) earned NFCA third team honors in 1995 and 1996 while **Terri Kobata** ('93-'96) earned third team honors in 1995 and second team honors in 1996.

Alkire finished the 2000 season with 13 home runs, 64 RBI and 73 hits. She also posted a 7-1 pitching record (in 13 appearances) with a 2.30 ERA, including a six-hitter against sixth-ranked and 2000 National Champion Oklahoma on Mar. 18, 2000.

Sharron pitched 27 complete games last season, tossing 246 strikeouts and posting a 0.88 ERA. In her career, the Agoura Hills, Calif., native has pitched 574.2 innings with 504 strikeouts and a 1.26 ERA entering the 2001 season.

Talented and noteworthy returnees: The Irish are loaded with veteran players and talented underclassmen this season. Out of the nine starting players that return to the lineup this season, eight earned postseason accolades from the BIG EAST conference. **Jen Sharron** earned her third consecutive BIG EAST Pitcher-of-the-Year award and was picked by league coaches to repeat the honor once again in 2001.

Melanie Alkire won her second consecutive BIG EAST Player-of-the-Year award last season and placed an exclamation point on her conference season by earning the Most Outstanding Player award at the 2000 BIG EAST Championship.

Andrea Loman helped the Irish earn a sweep of the major player-of-the-year awards by becoming the second consecutive Notre Dame player to earn BIG EAST Rookie-of-the-Year accolades (Jarrah Myers earned the distinction in 1999).

Alkire, **Loman**, **Myers** and **Sharron** were joined on the all-BIG EAST first team by **Danielle Klayman**, **Jenny Kriech** and **Lizzy Lemire**. **Andria Bledsoe** rounded out the Notre Dame award winners with a second team all-BIG EAST selection and a spot on the all-rookie team.

In keeping with the stellar league performance by her team, Irish head coach **Liz Miller** earned her second BIG EAST Coach-of-the-Year award. Miller previously won the award in 1996.

Miller is coaching her 26th season: Notre Dame head coach **Liz Miller** is now in her ninth season

Notre Dame Statistical Leaders (as of Feb. 28, 2001)

Batting Average (min. 15 at-bats)

Kriech, J.452
Myers, J.375
Klayman, D.346

Runs

Kriech, J.	6
Klayman, D.	6
Myers, J.	4
Bledsoe, A.	4

Hits

Kriech, J.	14
Alkire, M.	9
Myers, J.	9
Alkire, M.	9

Doubles

Alkire, M.	3
Myers, J.	3

Triples

Four tied with	1
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Home Runs

Bledsoe, A.	1
Loman, A.	1
Sharron, J.	1

RBI

Kriech, J.	8
Alkire, M.	4
Bledsoe, A.	4

SLG %

Myers, J.583
Kriech, J.581
Sharron, J.467

Total Bases

Kriech, J.	18
Myers, J.	14
Alkire, M.	12
Bledsoe, A.	12

On Base %

Kriech, J.514
Myers, J.464
Klayman, D.393

Stolen Bases

Kriech, J.	3
Lemire, L.	2
Three tied with	1

Fielding %

Kriech, J.	1.000
Lemire, L.	1.000
Klayman, D.	1.000

Assists

Madrid, A.	11
Bledsoe, A.	11
Alkire, M.	10

Pitching

ERA

Sharron, Jenn.	0.42
Schmidt, K.	1.35

Strikeouts

Sharron, Jenn.	40
Schmidt, K.	30

Shutouts

Sharron, Jenn.	2
Schmidt, K.	1

2001 BIG EAST Weekly Awards

Player of the Week:

Feb. 26 - *Jenny Kriech, Notre Dame*

Mar. 5 -
Mar. 12 -
Mar. 19 -
Mar. 26 -
April 2 -
April 9 -
April 16 -
April 23 -
April 30 -
May 7 -

Pitcher of the Week:

Feb. 26 - *Jen Sharron, Notre Dame*

Mar. 5 -
Mar. 12 -
Mar. 19 -
Mar. 26 -
April 2 -
April 9 -
April 16 -
April 23 -
April 30 -
May 7 -

with the Irish and 26th season as a collegiate head coach. She boasts a 872-292 (.749) record over the last 26 years, 17 of which she coached at Lake Michigan College before heading to the Golden Dome in 1993.

In each of her previous eight seasons with the Irish, Miller has led the team to a conference title (Midwestern Collegiate '93-'95, BIG EAST '96-present) and the team has advanced to the NCAA tournament five times.

While at Lake Michigan College, Miller's teams amassed 12 conference championships and 11 regional titles. From 1981-85 her team finished in the

nation's top five each year.

Miller currently ranks 16th on the NCAA winningest active coaches list with a 331-150 (.688) record at Notre Dame.

Alkire among the national and Notre Dame historical leaders: Senior Melanie Alkire compiled one of the best offensive seasons ever for a Notre Dame softball player in 2000. Alkire led the team in most of the offensive categories, ranking first in batting average (.376), hits (73), doubles (15), home runs (13), RBI (64), total bases (129), slugging percentage (.665) and on-base percentage (.421).

Her 64 RBI ranked fifth in the nation in 2000, while her 13 home run mark was ranked 34th.

Poised to eclipse many of the Notre Dame career offensive records in her final season, Alkire is fourth in career doubles (37), second in home runs (25), tied for first in RBI (137), sixth in walks (43) and fifth in toughest-to-strike out (15.80 at-bats per K).

So far in 2001, Alkire has nine hits, including three doubles and three RBI.

Sharron assaults the Irish record books: Senior lefthander Jen Sharron is coming off one of the most dominating seasons ever for a Notre Dame pitcher. After posting a 0.88 ERA and 246 strikeouts in 2000, she has positioned herself among the best to ever enter the pitching circle for the Fighting Irish.

Ranking in the top five in 12 career pitching categories, just a typical season from "#9" will put her on top of many of the all-time charts. Sharron has averaged 191.4 inning pitched, 168 strike outs, 20.3 wins and 18 complete games in her first three years with the Irish. Over that same period of time, she has won three consecutive BIG EAST Pitcher-of-the-Year awards and is favored to win her fourth trophy this season.

She also has raised the bar considerably in 2001. Just five starts into the new season, Sharron has a 5-0 record with a 0.42 ERA and 40 strikeouts.

A look at the Gamecocks: Notre Dame will take on Jacksonville State to begin competition in the Frost Tournament in Chattanooga, Tenn., on Friday, March 2, at 2 p.m. It will be the first meeting between the two



schools, who will also play again on Sunday, March 4, at 12 p.m.

The Gamecocks are 7-3 this season and are a member of the TransAmerica Conference. They feature three starting pitchers; Tara Ross, Meadow McWhorter and Jill Wilcoxson. Combined all three pitchers have a 0.71 ERA this season with 34 strikeouts and 18 runs (eight earned).

Allie Simons leads the Gamecock offense with 10 hits in 10 games this season (.345 average), while Laruen Buck (.258 average) tops the team in RBI with nine.



A look at the Blazers: Notre Dame will meet Alabama-Birmingham for the first time ever on Saturday, March 3, at 2 p.m. Both teams will meet again on Sunday, March 4, at 10 a.m.

UAB is 5-9 in 2001 and is a member of Conference USA. Two pitchers split the starting duties for the Blazers. Kerri Foster (2-4) and Kelli Thompson (2-3) have each started six games this year. The UAB pitching staff has a combined 1.32 ERA.

Thompson also leads the team in hitting with a .409 average in 22 plate appearances. She tops the team in RBI with six and boasts a .545 slugging percentage.

Cliffanie Engram leads the team in hits with 14.



A look at the Mocs: Notre Dame will face Tennessee-Chattanooga twice at the Frost Tournament this weekend (Friday, March 2, at 2 p.m. and Saturday, March 3, at 6 p.m.). They will be the third and fourth meetings between the Mocs and the Irish. UTC won the last meeting (Feb. 26, 1999) 4-3.

UTC is 13-7 in 2001 and are coming off a victory over Jacksonville State on Tuesday, Feb. 27.

Jaci Welsh leads the Moc offense with a .315 average, three home runs and 18 RBI. Jolene Martin is also hitting .315 with 17 hits in 14 games.

Tayla Trudell (1.74 ERA, 4-4 in eight starts, 31 K) and Beth Alexander (1.62 ERA, 7-2 in nine starts, 41 K) are the heart of the UTC pitching staff.

Irish placed at 19th in USA Today/NFCA Pre-

Notre Dame Softball Roster Breakdown

Starting Pitchers

Pos.	No.	Name	Year	Height	Bats/Throws	Birthdate	Hometown	Notes
LHP	9	Jen Sharron	Sr.	5-9	L/L	9-14-79	Agoura Hills, CA	Launched game-winning home run vs. Arkansas
RHP	8	Kristin Schmidt	Fr.	5-9	R/R	4-3-82	Houston, TX	3-1 with 30 Ks in 2001

Probable Starters

C	22	Jarrah Myers	Jr.	5-9	R/R	4-22-80	Carbondale, KS	Leading the team in slugging percentage (.583)
1B	33	Andrea Loman	So.	5-10	R/R	11-25-81	Riverside, CA	Hit first HR of the year vs. #4 Washington
2B	1	Alexis Madrid	So.	5-1	L/R	10-17-81	Temecula, CA	Game-winning RBI single vs. #18 South Carolina
SS	2	Melanie Alkire	Sr.	5-8	R/R	10-6-79	Union City, CA	Has nine hits in nine games
3B	18	Andria Bledsoe	So.	5-9	R/R	8-4-81	Higley, AZ	Blasted first career home run vs. USF
LF	16	Lizzy Lemire	Sr.	5-9	R/R	10-10-79	Irvine, CA	Co-MVP of the Holiday Inn Invitational
CF	11	Jenny Kriech	Jr.	5-7	L/L	9-8-80	Indianapolis, IN	Posted walk-off three-run triple vs. Maine
RF	4	Danielle Klayman	Sr.	5-7	L/L	9-17-79	San Diego, CA	Third on the team in batting average (.346)
DP	5	Kas Hoag	Jr.	5-5	L/R	6-13-80	Wallingford, CT	Two-run single vs. Maine

Off the Bench

IF	15	Nicole deFau	Fr.	5-9	R/R	10-5-82	Southington, CT	Started first game of her career as dp vs. Arkansas
C	19	Chantal DeAlcuaz	Fr.	5-9	R/R	4-29-82	Modesto, CA	Has scored one run as a pinch-runner this year
OF	17	Sarah Kirkman	Sr.	5-11	R/R	11-2-78	Kokomo, IN	Gives the Irish powerful bat on bench
1B	20	Lisa Mattison	So.	5-10	R/R	4-26-81	Granger, IN	Has relieved Loman in five games at 1B
RHP	7	Jessica Sharron	So.	5-8	R/R	10-12-81	Agoura Hills, CA	Pitched the seventh inning vs. Maryland

2001 BIG EAST Standings		
Team	2001 BIG EAST record	Overall
1. Notre Dame	0-0	8-1
2. St. John's	0-0	6-7
3. Boston College	0-0	5-6
4. Virginia Tech	0-0	5-6
5. Connecticut	0-0	2-3
6. Seton Hall	0-0	1-4
7. Syracuse	0-0	1-4
8. Providence	0-0	0-0
9. Rutgers	0-0	0-0
10. Villanova	0-0	0-0
11. Pittsburgh	0-0	0-5

season Top 25 poll: The Irish are ranked 19th in the USA Today/National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) preseason poll that was released on Wednesday, Jan. 24. The 19th ranking marks the highest the Irish have been placed in the preseason since 1994, when the team entered the season ranked 17th.

Notre Dame returns all nine starters from the 2000 squad that compiled a 47-14 record and won its second consecutive BIG EAST Championship title. Last year's team climbed to 17th in the NFCA poll last season, tying the school mark for the highest-ever national ranking. The Irish were ranked 24th in the final NFCA poll last season.

Irish boast a strong schedule this season: Notre Dame will face a number of ranked teams this season, as six opponents on the 2001 schedule appear in the preseason top 25. Another five opponents received mention in the 'others receiving votes' category in the poll. Notre Dame has already defeated #4 Washington and #18 South Carolina at the Holiday Inn Invitational (Feb. 16-18) in Tampa, Fla.

Two top-10 teams have been placed in Notre Dame's pool at the Kia Klassic in Fullerton, Calif. (March 15-18). Defending National Champion Oklahoma is ranked fifth while Fresno State, 54-14 in 2000, is ranked seventh.

The Irish also have their traditional meeting with DePaul this season (Thursday, April 19). The Blue Demons are currently ranked 11th.

Notre Dame posted a 5-3 record against ranked teams last season, with victories over #16 Louisiana Lafayette, #6 Oklahoma and #22 Illinois-Chicago three times.

Three talented rookies join the Irish roster: Liz Miller and her staff welcomes three talented freshmen to the team this season. Catcher **Chantal DeAlcuaz (Modesto, Calif.)**, IF/OF **Nicole deFau (Southington, Conn.)** and RHP **Kristin Schmidt (Houston, Texas)** all possess the talent and drive to contribute immediately in the Notre Dame lineup.

Schmidt, a 2000 second-team All-American coming out of North Shore Senior High School, has secured a spot in the Irish rotation with an impressive performance during the fall exhibition season.

Providing her team some solid depth in the infield, deFau has shown the range and ability to be a steady backup to Alexis Madrid and may also see some time in the outfield. deFau joins junior Kas Hoag as the only two Notre Dame players with Connecticut state roots.

DeAlcuaz, who is the eighth Irish player on the 2001 roster from California (Modesto), will have the opportunity to backup and learn from one of the best catchers in the country; junior Jarrah Myers.

Preseason all-BIG EAST awards announced: The

BIG EAST Results and Schedule

Feb. 20	Mar. 2
Campbell 6, St. John's 2	•St. John's vs. UNC Greensboro 9 a.m.
Campbell 5, St. John's 2	>Boston College vs. Furman 9 a.m.
	?Virginia Tech vs. Delaware 9 a.m.
Feb. 21	<Connecticut vs. Florida Atlantic 10 a.m.
Virginia Tech 2, Radford 0	>Boston College vs. San Diego State 11:30 a.m.
Virginia Tech 14, Radford 4 (5)	•St. John's vs. Maryland-Baltimore County 1 p.m.
St. John's 6, UNC Wilmington 2	+Rutgers vs. Ohio (2) 1 p.m.
St. John's 9, UNC Wilmington 6	-Syracuse vs. Illinois State 1:15 p.m.
	<Connecticut vs. Wichita State 2 p.m.
Feb. 23	?Virginia Tech vs. Elon 3 p.m.
%Virginia Tech 9, Marshall 4	?Virginia Tech vs. Marist 5 p.m.
&Georgia State 3, Pittsburgh 2	*Pittsburgh vs. Georgia Southern 5 p.m.
@St. John's 7, Towson State 0	*Pittsburgh vs. Tennessee 7 p.m.
&Florida International 4, Pittsburgh 3	
%Virginia Tech 2, Liberty 1 (11)	Mar. 3
%Virginia Tech 9, Marshall 4	?Virginia Tech vs. TBA
\$Seton Hall 5, Illinois-Chicago 0	•St. John's vs. Akron 9 a.m.
@East Carolina 2, St. John's 0	+Rutgers vs. Drexel (2) 9 a.m.
^Southeastern Louisiana 1, Boston College 0	-Syracuse vs. Texas A&M 11 a.m.
\$LSU 7, Seton Hall 2	*Pittsburgh vs. Florida A&M 11 a.m.
!Arizona 11, Connecticut 3	>Boston College vs. Furman 11:30 a.m.
!Connecticut 1, Southern Utah 0	-Syracuse vs. Illinois State 1:15 p.m.
	>Boston College vs. San Diego St. 2 p.m.
Feb. 24	<Connecticut vs. Fla. International 4 p.m.
^Boston College 9, Centenary 0 (6)	*Pittsburgh vs. Florida 7 p.m.
^La.-Lafayette 7, Boston College 4	<Connecticut vs. Ohio State 8 p.m.
^Boston College 11, Centenary 0	
\$Stanford 14, Seton Hall 8	Mar. 4
\$Illinois-Chicago 4, Seton Hall 1	>Boston College vs. TBA
%UT-Chattanooga 2, Virginia Tech 0	<Connecticut vs. TBA
%Virginia Tech 3, Kentucky 0	?Virginia Tech vs. TBA
@Canisius 5, St. John's 2	•St. John's in elimination play
@St. John's 4, Temple 1	*Pittsburgh in elimination play
&South Florida 4, Pittsburgh 0	-Syracuse vs. Iowa 10 a.m.
&Hofstra 4, Pittsburgh 1	#Providence vs. Robert Morris 11 a.m.
!Florida 6, Connecticut 3	{Villanova vs. George Mason 11 a.m.
!Drake 5, Connecticut 2	+Rutgers vs. Virginia (2) 1 p.m.
	-Syracuse vs. Texas A&M 2 p.m.
Feb. 25	Villanova vs. UNC Wilmington 3 p.m.
^La.-Lafayette 11, Boston College 0	#Providence vs. Monmouth 5 p.m.
^La.-Lafayette 6, Boston College 3	
%Marshall 3, Virginia Tech 2 (8)	* - Georgia Southern Tournament (Statesboro, Ga.)
\$Long Island 3, Seton Hall 2	# - Rebel Games (Osceola, Fla.)
&Indiana 4, Pittsburgh 1	+ - Virginia Tournament (Charlottesville, Va.)
!Connecticut 7, McNeese State 4	• - Triangle Classic (Raleigh, NC)
	- - Aggie II Invitational (College Station, Texas)
! - Wildcat Invitational (Tucson, Ariz.)	? - Dixie Classic (Virginia Beach, Va.)
^ - La.-Lafayette Tournament (Lafayette, La.)	< - Golden Panther Invitational (Miami, Fla.)
% - Chattanooga Invitational (Chattanooga, Tenn.)	> - Aztec Invitational (San Diego, Calif.)
& - Gladstone's Tournament (Tampa, Fla.)	{ - Spring Break Trip (Orlando, Fla.)
@ - Pirate Classic (Greenville, SC)	
\$ - NFCA Leadoff Classic (Columbus, Ga.)	

BIG EAST Conference has announced its choices for the preseason all-BIG EAST team (Jan. 4) and the Irish placed six players on the 13-member team of league standouts.

Senior shortstop **Melanie Alkire** was picked by the league coaches to earn her third consecutive BIG EAST Player of the Year award. Alkire was a unanimous first team all-BIG EAST selection in 2000 while leading the Irish in batting average (.376), hits (73), doubles (15), home runs (13), RBI (64), total bases (129), slugging percentage (.665) and on base percentage (.421). She boasts a .392 career batting average in conference games and was also named the Most Outstanding Player at the 2000 BIG EAST

Championship.

Senior left-hander **Jenn Sharron** earned the nod for the Preseason Pitcher of the Year award. She has won the conference's pitcher of the year award the previous three years, becoming the first Irish pitcher and first-ever freshman to earn the honor in 1998. Sharron went 6-2 in conference competition last season, posting a 0.92 ERA. Her 0.73 lifetime ERA in conference play ranks as fifth on the conference career charts.

Alkire and Sharron were joined on the 2001 preseason all-BIG EAST team by teammates **Jarrah Myers**, **Jennifer Kriech**, **Lizzy Lemire**, and 2000 BIG EAST Rookie of the Year **Andrea Loman**.