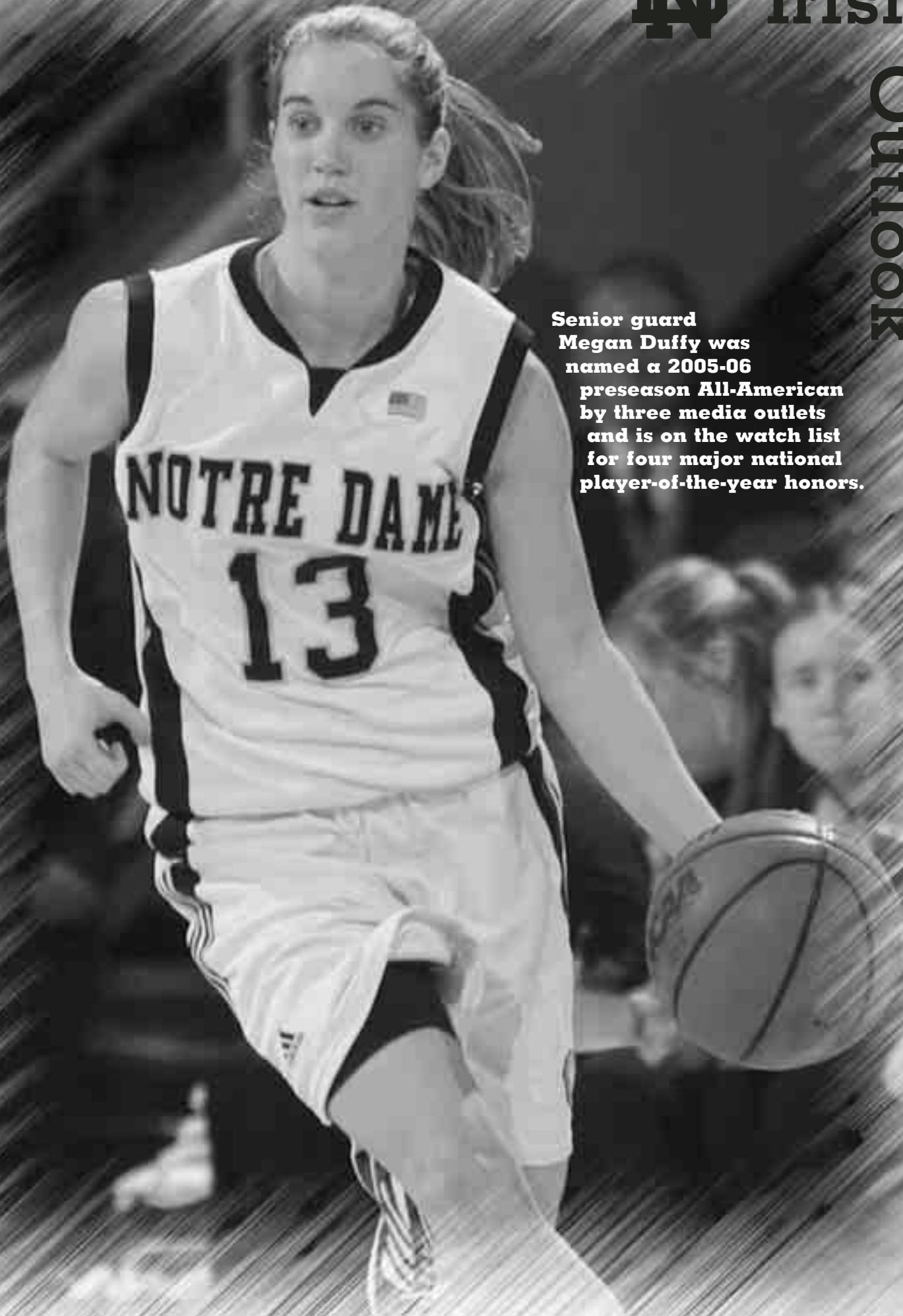




**Irish**

**Outlook**



**Senior guard Megan Duffy was named a 2005-06 preseason All-American by three media outlets and is on the watch list for four major national player-of-the-year honors.**

## Finding Balance Will Be Key to Irish Success

*Notre Dame returns three starters, eight monogram winners from last year's 27-6 club*

While Notre Dame head coach Muffet McGraw might not have a degree in science, or even a white lab coat hanging behind her office door, it's a good bet chemistry will come into play when McGraw and the Irish tip off the 2005-06 season.

Notre Dame has three starters and eight monogram winners returning from last year's squad that posted a 27-6 record and made the program's 10th consecutive trip to the NCAA Tournament. However, the Irish, who were ranked among the top 10 teams in the nation for much of the season and knocked off seven top-25 opponents along the way, saw their season come to an abrupt end with a 70-61 loss to Arizona State in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

The shock of that setback might have dissipated somewhat, but the pain and the scars remain fresh in the minds of Notre Dame's players and coaches. It's been the common thread that has linked all of them together during the off-season, forming an even stronger internal bond that has McGraw excited about the potential for her club this season.

"Right now, I'm very comfortable with this team and where they're at," the veteran Irish mentor says. "This is a team that has great chemistry and I really enjoy being around them every day. Already, I think this is one of my favorite teams. These past two years, we have been very fortunate to recruit some great players who are also great people, hard workers and just fun to be around. That's something that makes coaching them even more enjoyable."

One of the primary lessons that McGraw and her charges learned from last year's disappointment was the importance of balance. Although Notre Dame reaped tremendous rewards from having a two-time All-American and future WNBA Draft pick in the fold like recently-departed Jacqueline Batteast, opposing teams sometimes were able to structure their defenses in such a way as to neutralize the multi-dimensional forward. When that occurred, the Irish had to look for scoring and rebounding support from other sources, something that didn't always take place.

Now, with the graduation of Batteast and center Teresa Borton (the team's second-leading rebounder and a steady force in the post for four years), Notre Dame does not have a single marquee presence on the floor, someone whom other teams can key on each night. With the impressive array of talent on the Irish roster in 2005-06, McGraw sees greater opportunities for balance and success this season.

"Last year, we relied on Jackie so much, that a lot of other players didn't really have a chance



Senior co-captain Megan Duffy averaged a career-best 12.3 points per game and connected at a .400 clip from beyond the three-point line last season.

to show what they can do," McGraw notes. "They let their talent take a backseat to hers. This year, I don't think we are going to have anybody who will absolutely be the one every game. Instead, we will have an array of choices every game and different people are going to step up. But in the end, it's critical that everybody contributes in some way and that they do it consistently, because that's what our biggest challenge will be."

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When it comes to choices, McGraw has a veritable cornucopia of options in the backcourt this season. The Irish have five veterans returning, including both starters, and four of those players appeared in at least 29 of Notre Dame's 33 games last year, averaging at least 13 minutes per night. In addition, of the Irish guards coming back in 2005-06, only one is a senior,

meaning there will be a great deal of consistency at the key leadership positions for years to come.

One of the cornerstones of any championship-caliber basketball team is its point guard, and Notre Dame has one of the nation's best in senior Megan Duffy. The 5-foot-7 native of Dayton, Ohio, was an Associated Press and Kodak/WBCA honorable mention All-America selection, as well as a first-team all-BIG EAST Conference pick last season after averaging a career-best 12.3 points and 5.4 assists per game, ranking second in the BIG EAST and 28th nationally in the latter category. She also led the league in steals (2.7 spg.; 44th in NCAA) and free throw percentage (school-record .895; fourth in NCAA) and was seventh with a 1.73 assist/turnover ratio.

Starting her second year as team captain in 2005-06, Duffy has been at her best when the pressure is greatest, registering 19.5 ppg. with a superb .579 field goal percentage and .611 three-point ratio during the 2005 postseason. She also averaged 14.6 points and 4.9 assists per game with a .506 field goal percentage and .512 three-point mark in a dozen games against ranked opponents last year.

As if all that weren't enough, Duffy spent this summer as a member of the USA World University Games Team that went 7-0 and won the gold medal in Izmir, Turkey. Voted a co-captain by her teammates prior to the competition, Duffy started all

seven games for the United States, averaging 6.1 points and 2.1 assists per game with a team-best .400 three-point percentage (tied for eighth among all players in the 20-team field). She also helped direct the high-powered American offense that averaged 97.4 ppg., recorded four 50-point wins and set a USA World University Games record with a 43.1 ppg. victory margin.

Duffy already has been tapped as a preseason candidate for two major national player-of-the-year awards — the State Farm Wade Trophy and the John R. Wooden Women's Award. She also is a prime contender for the Frances Pomeroy Naismith Award that goes annually to the country's top senior player standing 5-foot-8 or under. Former Irish point guard (and current WNBA veteran) Niele Ivey took home that honor in 2001 after helping guide Notre Dame to its first national championship.







Junior guard Breona Gray started every game for the Irish last season and has added a polished offensive game to her already solid defensive prowess.

However, for all the statistics and awards Duffy has been accorded throughout her career, it's the intangible qualities she brings to the team — leadership, confidence and a phenomenal work ethic — that set her apart from the rest of the pack and have earned her the respect and admiration of coaches and players alike.

"All the coaches that talk to me about our team talk about Megan Duffy first because they would love to coach her," McGraw says. "She's the kind of player every coach dreams of having because she simply refuses to lose. She'll do anything she possibly can to help the team be successful. That's the key — when you're coaching against a player like Megan, you know that they're never going to quit, never going to back down and will always make it difficult for you."

While Duffy may receive a great deal of attention, one of the most improved players on the Notre Dame roster during the past year has been junior guard Breona Gray. Coming into last season, Gray had never started a game at the college level and was averaging less than 12 minutes per game. However, she made tremendous strides prior to her sophomore campaign, impressing the Irish coaching staff with her determination and tenacious attitude on the court and earning a spot in the starting lineup. Once there, Gray refused to give up her starting role, debuting for all 33 games last season, and

doubling her scoring and rebounding averages along the way (5.5 ppg., 3.3 rpg.).

Not content with being an everyday starter, Gray feverishly worked on her game again during this summer, adding a potent perimeter jumper to her expanding offensive arsenal. Already one of the team's top defenders, the Las Vegas product has shown a non-stop intensity and has kept opposing guards on the heels for the better part of her two years at Notre Dame.

"I see the improvement Breona has made from the moment she got on campus until now, and I believe she's going to make her mark in a lot of games for us this season," McGraw comments. "We're also expecting her to take an added leadership role for us and help bring our underclassmen along in the system."

Beyond the starting duo of Duffy and Gray, Notre Dame has a strong trio of sophomores, led by Charel Allen. The Monessen, Pa., resident burst on the scene in a big way as a rookie, coming off the bench to average 7.7 points and 4.2 rebounds per game on the way to a berth on the BIG EAST All-Freshman Team. She also was not fazed by the added pressures of the college game, ringing up 16 points in a Preseason WNIT semifinal win over No. 6 Duke and adding 11 points in a victory at No. 9/10 Connecticut.

However, much like her team, Allen saw her freshman season come to an untimely end when she suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in her left knee during the second half of Notre Dame's loss to Arizona State in the NCAA Tournament. Allen has spent the majority of the summer rehabilitating from that injury and the subsequent surgery, although she is expected to be cleared by team medical personnel in time for the start of fall practice in October.

"Charel probably won't be 100 percent until March, but by the time the BIG EAST Tournament rolls around, she should be playing her best basketball," McGraw observes. "In January, you'll begin to see an improvement in her game from where she started. Overall, this is going to be a difficult year for her to bounce back from that kind of injury, which is something she hasn't had to experience before. It will

test her both mentally and physically, and how she responds to that challenge will dictate what her role will be for us this season."

While Allen was an impact player for Notre Dame last season, Tulyah Gaines may be poised for a breakout year for the Irish as a sophomore. The speedy point guard got a late start to her college career, missing much of the preseason while recovering from knee surgery. Then, five minutes into her first game against Illinois State, she went down with a neck injury that caused her to miss the next four contests.

Once she was completely healthy, Gaines saw her confidence steadily improve throughout the season, as she appeared in 29 games and averaged 2.4 points and 2.0 rebounds in 13.7 minutes per game. A fiery competitor with a motor that never seems to stop, Gaines has worked hard this off-season, putting in long hours in both the gym and weight room to regain the form that made her the Gatorade High School Player of the Year in the state of Nevada during her senior year at Cheyenne High School in Las Vegas. It's this kind of intensity and discipline that have convinced McGraw that big things are in store for Gaines in 2005-06.

"Coming off the summer, I'd say Tulyah is our most improved player," the Irish head coach says. "She has made great strides in her game and is someone who could be pushing for a starting job this season. She gives us an added dimension on the floor with her speed and attacking style, which allows us to pick up the tempo at both ends. When she's in the game, she can also give us a chance to slide Megan over to the "2" spot and open up some more perimeter scoring opportunities."

The other returning sophomore is Amanda Tsipis. The Perry, Ohio, native saw action in 12 games for the Irish in her initial campaign, averaging 0.5 points and 0.1 rebounds per contest. A solid scoring threat from the outside, Tsipis gives Notre Dame additional depth, with her biggest contributions coming during practice sessions.

"Not a lot of people may see what Amanda brings to our team, but she has become such a vital presence because of her unselfish nature and desire to do everything possible to make this team better," McGraw notes. "She is always positive and upbeat, two things that everyone really responds to on a daily basis."

Notre Dame's depth at the guard position will be strengthened even more this season with the addition of talented freshman Lindsay Schrader. The 2005 Illinois Miss Basketball and Illinois Gatorade Player of the Year, Schrader is one of the most decorated players to come from the Land of Lincoln in recent years. A resident of Bartlett, Ill., she averaged 20.7 points and 10.0





rebounds per game with a .490 field goal percentage during a stellar prep career that saw her wind up ranked among the top 10 in Illinois high school history in four different categories. The four-time all-state pick also was tapped as a consensus All-America selection during her senior season by McDonald's, the WBCA and Parade Magazine when she logged 22.1 points and 10.6 rebounds per game while guiding Bartlett High School to a 30-5 record and its first-ever trip to the Illinois Class AA title game.

"This is the first year in a while that we are asking our freshman to step up and contribute significantly, and I believe Lindsay is ready for that opportunity," McGraw says. "She brings the ability to score in a lot of different ways and that's going to make her a unique weapon for us, because she's so unlike anyone else on our team. She also has great hands and is a very good rebounder. Once she gets into the flow of things at this level, we're going to rely on her more and more and see how things develop."

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If the guard position is one of consistency and stability for Notre Dame, then the front line might be where many changes will occur for the Irish this season. In addition to the departure of Batteast and Borton — who combined for 25.1 points and 12.4 rebounds per game — Notre Dame also saw its renowned post coach, Carol Owens, step down from the program after a decade of service in order to take over as the head coach at her alma mater, Northern Illinois. In her place, the Irish welcome Angie Potthoff, a three-time All-American at Penn State who helped the Lady Lions win a pair of Big Ten Conference Tournament titles in the mid-1990s before embarking on a pro career in both the American Basketball League (ABL) and Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA).

Still, McGraw disagrees with many observers who might point to the changes in the Notre Dame post game as being a question mark for 2005-06.

"Actually, I see it as a positive," she states. "I firmly believe Angie is going to be a great coach. She has played at a high level, understands the game, and knows how each player can do things a little differently, but still get the job done. Angie also has a ton of passion for what she's doing and our players will respond to that. The fact remains that we have only four post players and they all have to understand the importance of staying in the game and remaining out of foul trouble. That will be one of our biggest challenges this season."

Senior forward Courtney LaVere takes on the mantle of veteran leadership in the post for Notre Dame this season. The 6-foot-3 Ventura, Calif., product has started off and on throughout her college career, which also has been short-

ened at times due to injury. Last season, she started off well, logging three consecutive double-digit scoring games, including an 18-point outing in the season opener against Illinois State. She also carded a double-double in the Preseason WNIT semifinal win over Duke, collecting 13 points and a season-high 11 rebounds, despite suffering a torn meniscus in her left knee during the contest.

That injury would eventually require arthroscopic knee surgery that kept LaVere on the sidelines for a month. She played well at times after her return to action, chalking up a team-high 14 points in the win at Connecticut, logging a double-double (13 points, 10 rebounds at Syracuse) and adding 17 points in a victory at Pittsburgh. She ended the season averaging 7.5 points and 3.9 rebounds per game.

As she begins her final season at Notre Dame, LaVere is working her way back to the form she flashed as a freshman, when she averaged 12.3 points and 5.6 rebounds per game with five double-doubles and earned BIG EAST All-Rookie Team honors. If she can remain healthy for the entire season, both LaVere and her coach know that the potential exists for a superb senior year.

"I see Courtney as having a shot at All-America honors this season as long as she can stay on the floor," McGraw says. "She has so much talent and in some ways, a lot of our success will be based on the kind of year she has. We've seen that she is capable of great things and we really need her to be a solid, constant presence on the block."

While LaVere battled through her injuries last season, junior forward Crystal Erwin saw a chance to prove herself and took full advantage. After a rookie season where she steadily progressed in a controlled environment, Erwin made tremendous strides as a sophomore, starting 17 games and doubling her scoring and rebounding totals (5.3 ppg., 3.8 rpg.). In addition, she brought a physical, unyielding force to the low post, while she developed a smooth offensive game. Her best outing came against Washington, when she tied a Joyce Center record by going 9-for-9 from the field and scoring a career-high 24 points.

This season, Erwin will be called upon for greater things on a regular basis, as she moves from a reserve role into contention for a starting position. She also shares the burden of leadership in the post with LaVere as the two grizzled veterans in the paint aim to continue Notre Dame's tradition of rock-solid post defense.

"I love Crystal's game and her attitude on the floor," McGraw comments. "She sets the tone for this team every night and gives off that intensity that says this is a team that isn't going to back down from

anyone. We're going to fight and scrap and claw for everything, and that's going to have a lot to do with Crystal. She's going to set the emotional standard for what we will accept down low."

The only other returning monogram winner on the front line for Notre Dame is sophomore center Melissa D'Amico. The 6-foot-5 Long Islander was brought along slowly last season, learning much from the time she spent as Borton's understudy. Although she played in 26 games last season, D'Amico's minutes were limited (6.1 per game) and she logged 1.9 points and 1.4 rebounds per contest. Confidence and a hunger to prove herself was perhaps the biggest keys to unlocking D'Amico's potential and that attitude developed during this summer, when she spent countless hours working to polish her skills at both ends of the court.

"Melissa didn't get many opportunities last season, which I'm sure was a bit frustrating for her," McGraw says. "Yet, she's turned that into a positive by the way she's handled things this summer. She's putting in extra hours in the gym and with the weights, and that's going to pay off for her down the line. We're expecting big things from Melissa this season and when you combine her with Courtney and Crystal, you have the makings of a really strong post presence."

The Irish also will get an infusion of youth on the front line in 2005-06, as freshman Chandrica Smith joins the fold. A 6-foot-1 forward, Smith spent last season at renowned Oak Hill



Now injury-free, senior forward Courtney LaVere aims to return to the form that made her a freshman All-American in 2002-03.







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This year offers an intriguing mix of choices for Notre Dame, between experience returnees and blossoming young talent. The Irish will be able to take advantage of numerous options in both the backcourt and the post, rolling out combinations that will keep opponents off-balance. However, the one intangible that will determine just how far Notre Dame goes this season will be its leadership — on the court and on the sidelines. In both areas, the Irish have an established veteran, someone who has been through the rigors of high-level college basketball and understands exactly what is expected of her in order to be successful.

"When you have a captain like Megan Duffy, you're going to be prepared for everything," McGraw says. "She and the entire coaching staff will make sure that this team is prepared, night in and night out. That's one quality that we know we will be able to count on this season. If we can build up some other qualities on a consistent basis — scoring, rebounding, defense — and everyone plays at their peak potential and knows how their role fits into the bigger picture, this season will be a very special one for us."



Following an improved second season, junior forward Crystal Erwin will step into the starting lineup on a regular basis in 2005-06.



Sophomore guard Charel Allen missed much of the summer while rehabilitating from off-season knee surgery, but will approach full strength later in the 2005-06 season.

Academy in Mouth of Wilson, Va., where she averaged 17.5 points and 6.2 rebounds per game while leading her team to a third-place finish at the prestigious National Association of Christian Athletes (NACA) Tournament. Prior to her stint at Oak Hill, Smith played two years at Stephenson High School and one year at Wesleyan High School, both near her Stone Mountain, Ga., home. In total, Smith averaged 11.1 points and 6.1 rebounds per game during her high school career, while her teams posted a combined 117-13 (.900) record, won two Georgia state titles and finished as the state runner-up once.

A two-time Street & Smith's All-America choice and three-time adidas Top Ten Camp All-Star pick, Smith offers a blend of versatility and athleticism that will allow her to quickly make an impact at the college level. She has the ability to slash to the basket, but also drop back and stretch defenses with a smooth perimeter game.

"Like Lindsay (Schrader), Chandrica is going to be called upon to step into the mix from day one," McGraw notes. "She's such a good defender and rebounder and we think those are the areas that she can help us the most. She also runs the floor very well which can only boost our transition game even more. On top of that, she knows how to score and she will be able to help us in that area, too."

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Notre Dame has never backed down from a challenge when it comes to scheduling and the 2005-06 docket is no exception. In addition to a non-conference schedule that includes matchups with four Big Ten schools (Purdue, Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan), as well as perennial power Tennessee, NCAA Tournament qualifier USC, and a possible meeting with either North Carolina State or Utah, the Irish know they will lining up in arguably the nation's toughest league this season as the BIG EAST expands to 16 teams. Joining the fray will be Cincinnati, DePaul, Louisville, Marquette and South Florida, all former members of Conference USA. Conversely, Boston College has left the BIG EAST to become part of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC).

With the new conference lineup now in place, the BIG EAST has revised its women's basketball scheduling format beginning this season. Teams will play seven home games and seven road games, while also taking a "repeat" opponent whom they will face both at home and on the road. The conference has designated DePaul as Notre Dame's "repeat" opponent this season, meaning the Irish and Blue Demons will rekindle a rivalry that began more than two decades ago in the now-defunct North Star Conference. DePaul is coming off a 26-5 season in 2004-05, having advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Besides DePaul, Notre Dame is scheduled to play host to Connecticut, Marquette, Pittsburgh, Providence, Seton Hall, South Florida and Villanova this season. Four of those schools qualified for postseason play, led by UConn's NCAA Sweet Sixteen berth and WNIT appearances for Marquette, USF and Villanova.

Meanwhile, the Irish plan to hit the road for games at Cincinnati, Georgetown, Louisville, Rutgers, St. John's, Syracuse and West Virginia. Highlighting that list is Rutgers, which advanced to the regional finals of the NCAA Tournament and was ranked among the top 10 in both national polls at season's end. Louisville also qualified for the NCAA Tournament, while St. John's and West Virginia garnered WNIT bids (WVU fell at Southwest Missouri State in the title game).

"There have never been any off-nights in the BIG EAST and with the addition of these new teams, the challenge is going to even greater. All of these players and coaches know what it takes to compete nationally and those teams will easily replace what we've lost during the past couple of years in terms of caliber of play. That's why our conference has been so successful in the postseason over the years and why it will continue to be that way — we are all well-prepared from going through the nightly battles in one of the toughest conferences in the country."



**The Opening Tip**

As the season approaches, six media outlets have included Notre Dame in their preseason top 25 polls:

- \* *Athlon Sports* - 15th
- \* *Women's Basketball News Serv.* - 15th
- \* *Street & Smith's* - 18th
- \* *Lindy's Annual* - 18th
- \* *CBS Sportsline.com Yearbook* - 19th
- \* *Basketball Times* - 22nd

Actually, that shouldn't come as a shock to most observers. The Irish have been ranked in the preseason Top 25 of both the Associated Press and ESPN/USA Today polls eight times in the past nine seasons (1996-97 through 2004-05). The only time in that span when Notre Dame was not ranked in the preseason was 1997-98, the season after its first trip to the NCAA Final Four.

The Irish achieved their highest preseason rankings in 2000-01, opening at No. 5 in the AP poll and No. 6 in the coaches' poll. Last year, Notre Dame debuted at No. 10 in the AP balloting and No. 11 in the ESPN/USA Today survey. The media (AP) poll proved to be pretty accurate, as the Irish wound up finishing 11th in that ranking following their 27-6 record and 10th consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance.

**Irish Put Streaks To Test In 2005-06**

Notre Dame will enter this season looking to keep several streaks intact:

- 12 consecutive 20-win seasons — matches the longest current streak in the BIG EAST (Connecticut - 12); also one of six teams in the nation with an active run of that length.
- 12 consecutive postseason berths — the second-longest current streak in the BIG EAST (Connecticut - 17).
- 10 consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances — also the second-longest current streak in the BIG EAST (Connecticut - 17).
- 10 consecutive first-round NCAA Tournament victories.
- Nine straight top 20 recruiting classes as ranked by Blue Star Index — one of three teams in the country with a current streak of that length.

**What's Back for the Irish in 2005-06**

Starters .....	3
Monogram Winners .....	8
All-Americans .....	1 (Megan Duffy)
All-BIG EAST Selections .....	1 (Megan Duffy)
Points .....	61.7% (1,349 of 2,188)
Rebounds .....	66.3% (840 of 1,267)
Assists.....	74.4% (381 of 512)
Blocked Shots .....	38.3% (64 of 167)
Steals .....	76.8% (241 of 314)
Field Goals Made .....	58.9% (465 of 789)
Three-Point Field Goals Made .....	77.9% (60 of 77)
Free Throws Made .....	67.4% (359 of 533)



*Speedy sophomore guard Tulyah Gaines took full advantage of summer workouts to improve her game and could be an impact player for Notre Dame this season.*

**Give Her Five (Hundred)**

With Notre Dame's first win this season, head coach Muffet McGraw will become the 27th women's basketball coach in NCAA Division I history to reach the 500-win mark. McGraw has a career record of 499-196 (.718) in 23 years of coaching, including the past 18 seasons at Notre Dame (411-155, .728).

Here's a closer look at how the milestone 500th victory will break down for McGraw:

- Should Notre Dame's first win come prior to Dec. 5, she will be the 10th NCAA Division I women's basketball coach to register her 500th victory before turning 50 years old. The others in that elite group are:
  - Pat Summitt, Tennessee .....(41)
  - Rene Portland, Penn State .....(44)
  - C. Vivian Stringer, Rutgers .....(45)
  - Sylvia Hatchell, No. Carolina .....(45)
  - Theresa Greutz, Illinois .....(45)
  - Jody Conradt, Texas .....(46)
  - Tara VanDerveer, Stanford .....(47)
  - Geno Auriemma, UConn .....(49)
  - Harry Perretta, Villanova .....(49)
- She will be the fourth active coach in the BIG EAST Conference to reach the career 500-win mark, joining Stringer (723), Auriemma (557) and Perretta (507).
- She will be the third BIG EAST coach in as many years to celebrate her 500th win. Auriemma hit the milestone late in the 2002-03 campaign, while Perretta got his landmark win midway through last season.

**Notre Dame's All-Star Candidates**

When discussions turn to the nation's top point guard for 2005-06, Notre Dame senior guard Megan Duffy certainly should be right in the mix. The Dayton, Ohio, native, who earned honorable mention All-America laurels from the Associated Press and was a Kodak/WBCA All-America Team

finalist last season, is beginning her third season as the everyday starter at the point for the Irish, having shown strong improvement in each of her first three seasons under the Golden Dome.

Duffy is one of three returning first-team all-BIG EAST selections, joining West Virginia's Meg Bulger and Rutgers' Cappie Pondexter. Duffy is tops among all conference returnees in assists (5.39 apg. in 2004-05), steals (2.73 spg.) and free throw percentage (.895), having led the conference in the latter two categories last season (and placing fourth nationally in FT%). She also ranks fourth among BIG EAST returnees with a 1.73 assist/turnover ratio last year, and is seventh among conference veterans in three-point field goals per game (1.52).

Senior forward Courtney LaVere should be completely healthy after battling a handful of injuries the past two seasons. A former BIG EAST All-Freshman Team selection, LaVere averaged 7.5 points and 1.0 blocks per game last season, ranking fifth among BIG EAST returnees in the latter department.

Sophomore guard Charel Allen was a BIG EAST All-Freshman Team selection last season after carding 7.7 points and 4.2 rebounds per game. Although she has spent the better part of this summer rehabilitating from left knee surgery, Allen could be cleared by the Notre Dame medical staff in time for the start of preseason practice in October.

The Irish have a handful of other players who also could merit all-star recognition. Junior guard Breona Gray (5.5 ppg., 3.3 rpg.) and junior forward Crystal Erwin (5.3 ppg., 3.8 rpg.) both doubled their scoring and rebounding totals last season and a similar improvement could put them in line for all-league honors. Sophomore guard Tulyah Gaines (2.4 ppg., 2.0 rpg.) spent much of her rookie season catching up after missing the bulk of preseason workouts recovering from knee surgery. Now at 100 percent, she could see a great deal of court time for Notre Dame in the 2005-06 campaign.

**Duffy On Preseason Award Watch Lists**

Senior guard Megan Duffy already has found her name on preseason candidate lists for two of the top national player-of-the-year trophies this season. The 5-foot-7 product of Dayton, Ohio, is among 25 early candidates for the State Farm Wade Trophy, and she is on the 30-player watch list for the John R. Wooden Women's Award. It's the first time in Duffy's career she has been placed under consideration for either award, and it marks the third consecutive year a Notre Dame player has made both preseason candidate lists (Jacqueline Batteast was chosen prior to the 2003-04 and 2004-05 campaigns).

The Wade Trophy, which is coordinated annually by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA), is named in honor for renowned former Delta State coach Lily Margaret Wade, who led her squad to three national titles in the 1970s.

Meanwhile, the Wooden Women's Award is in its third year and is named for the legendary UCLA men's basketball coach who guided the Bruins to 10 NCAA titles in the 1960s and 1970s.

Besides the Wade Trophy and Wooden Women's Award, Duffy is a prime candidate for the Frances Pomeroy Naismith Award, which goes to the country's top senior player who stands 5-foot-8 or under.

**New Kids On The Court**

Notre Dame has two newcomers in the fold this







season. Collectively, this duo was ranked as the No. 16 recruiting class in the country by Blue Star Index, marking the ninth consecutive year the Irish have welcomed a top-20 rookie corps.

Lindsay Schrader, a 6-0 guard from Bartlett (Ill.) High School, is one of the most highly-decorated prep players to come out of Illinois in recent years. The 2005 Illinois Miss Basketball and Gatorade Player of the Year, Schrader averaged 20.7 points, 10.0 rebounds and 3.0 steals per game with a .490 field goal percentage during her high school career. She was a McDonald's and WBCA All-America selection in 2005, while also garnering third-team Parade All-America honors. A three-time Street & Smith's All-American, Schrader ranks among the top 10 in Illinois high school history in four categories, including field goals made (951) and consecutive double-figure scoring games (72). She wound up being ranked among the top 30 by three separate national recruiting services — 14th by Blue Star Index, 21st by All-Game Sports and 26th by All-Star Girls Report (eighth among shooting guards).

Chandrica Smith, a 6-1 forward from Stone Mountain, Ga., offers a blend of strength and athleticism to the Irish roster this season. A graduate of Oak Hill Academy in Mouth of Wilson, Va., Smith averaged 11.1 points, 6.1 rebounds, 2.4 steals and 1.7 blocks per game with a .565 field goal percentage during her prep career. She also was a two-time Street & Smith's honorable mention All-American and a three-time all-star selection at the prestigious adidas Top Ten Camp. Smith spent her first three high school seasons in her home state of Georgia, and all told, her prep teams posted a combined 117-13 (.900) record, winning two Georgia state titles, reaching the championship game once and finishing third in the



Freshman guard Lindsay Schrader got an early taste of action on her new home court, scoring nine points in the 2005 McDonald's High School All-America Game that was played last March at the Joyce Center.

National Association of Christian Athletes (NACA) Division I Tournament once (the latter was with Oak Hill in 2004-05). Smith was rated as high as 29th in the nation by All-Star Girls Report.

### Changes On The Sideline

There are three changes to the Notre Dame staff for the 2005-06 season.

Coquese Washington, who is entering her seventh season on the Irish coaching staff, has been promoted to associate head coach. Washington, who also played for head coach Muffet McGraw from 1989-93, is been part of the Notre Dame women's basketball program for 10 of the first 18 years of the McGraw era.

Angie Potthoff has been hired as an assistant coach, replacing longtime aide Carol Owens, who resigned in March to become head coach at her alma mater, Northern Illinois. Potthoff will focus her efforts primarily on working with the Irish posts.

Meanwhile, Stephanie Menio is Notre Dame's new coordinator of basketball operations, stepping in for five-year veteran Heather Maxwell, who departed to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota.

### Duffy Strikes Gold With Team USA

Senior point guard Megan Duffy (Dayton, Ohio/Chaminade-Julienne HS) and her United States teammates won the gold medal at the 2005 World University Games, defeating Serbia & Montenegro, 79-53 in the title game on Aug. 19 in Izmir, Turkey. It was the Americans' seventh victory in as many games at the tournament and improved their all-time record at the World University Games to 82-15 (.845), with 13 medals in 14 appearances (six gold, six silver, one bronze).

Duffy, a candidate for the State Farm Wade Trophy, Wooden Women's Award and Frances Pomeroy Naismith Award during the upcoming season, is the third Notre Dame women's basketball player to capture a gold medal in international competition, and the second in as many years. Last summer, former Irish All-American and 2001 consensus national player of the year Ruth Riley was a member of the U.S. Senior National Team that struck gold at the Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. In addition, Beth Morgan, Notre Dame's all-time leading scorer and a two-time All-American, earned a gold medal in 1997 with the USA World University Games Team — ironically, one of her teammates on the squad was current Irish assistant coach Angie Potthoff (a '97 graduate of Penn State). All told, Notre Dame women's basketball players now have garnered eight medals in international competition (three gold, three silver, two bronze).

Duffy, who was voted a co-captain by her American teammates prior to the tournament, started all seven games for the United States, scoring four points and grabbing three rebounds in the final against Serbia & Montenegro. The Notre Dame veteran also was assigned the challenging task of guarding her opposite number in Serbian point guard Marija Eric, who entered the title game averaging 7.0 points (.519 field goal percentage), 5.2 assists and 4.2 steals per game, ranking among the top three at the tournament in the latter two categories. Duffy's defense was outstanding, as she limited Eric to three points (1-of-3 shooting) and two assists while hounding her into 10 turnovers.

During the World University Games, Duffy averaged 6.1 points and 2.1 assists per contest in her seven starts, leading the team in scoring on

two occasions (14 points vs. Czech Republic; 13 points vs. Poland). Her .400 three-point percentage (8-of-20) also not only earned her a share of team-high honors, but tied for eighth among all players in the 20-team tournament. In addition, she was at the helm of an offense that averaged 97.4 points per game and broke the 100-point mark three times. Team USA won every game by at least 24 points, registered four 50-point victories and finished with a new U.S. World University Games-record 43.1 ppg. winning margin. The old mark of +41.9 ppg. had been set in 1991 by a squad that featured future Olympians Dawn Staley and Lisa Leslie.

### House Rules

Notre Dame continues to maintain one of the nation's strongest home court advantages at the Joyce Center. The Irish have posted a 277-72 (.794) record at the venerable facility, having logged winning marks in 26 of the program's 28 years of existence.

Notre Dame's home court success has been even more pronounced since it joined the BIG EAST in 1995-96. During the past decade, the Irish have carded a 127-11 (.920) record at the Joyce Center, including winning streaks of 51 games and 25 games in that span. And, Notre Dame has won 54 of its last 57 non-conference games at home (a .947 mark), dating back to the 1994-95 season.

### Crowded House

Beginning with its NCAA championship season of 2000-01, Notre Dame has ranked among the top 20 in the nation in home attendance each of the past five years, including a No. 16 rating in 2004-05 (5,830 per game).

What's more, each of the top 20 women's basketball crowds in Joyce Center history have come during the 18-year tenure of head coach Muffet McGraw, with 19 of those 20 occurring in the past five seasons (2000-01 through 2004-05).

Lastly, the Irish have attracted at least 5,000 fans to 65 of their last 67 home games, including 12 contests with at least 8,000 fans and the first two sellouts in the program's history.

### Setting Records In The Classroom

The Irish women's basketball team posted a 3.151 grade-point average for the spring 2005 term, marking the ninth time in the past 10 semesters the squad has recorded team GPAs of 3.0 or better.

Senior Megan Duffy was a 2005 second-team ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District V selection after posting a 3.833 GPA and earning Dean's List honors during the fall 2004 term. She enters her final year with a 3.508 cumulative GPA (and a current string of three consecutive Dean's List citations) in the College of Arts and Letters as a double major in psychology and computer applications.

Notre Dame also placed six players on the 2004-05 BIG EAST Academic All-Star Team, including current players Duffy, Courtney LaVere and Amanda Tshipis. Honorees must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better and completed a minimum of two semesters of academic work.



**Roster Breakdowns**

**By Class**

Seniors.....	2
Juniors.....	2
Sophomores.....	4
Freshmen.....	2

**By Position**

Guards.....	6
Forwards.....	3
Centers.....	1

**By State**

California.....	2
Nevada.....	2
Ohio.....	2
Georgia.....	1
Illinois.....	1
New York.....	1
Pennsylvania.....	1

**By Height**

D'Amico.....	6-5
D'Amico.....	6-5
LaVere.....	6-3
Erwin.....	6-2
Smith.....	6-1
Schrader.....	6-0
Allen.....	5-11
Gray.....	5-9
Tsipis.....	5-9
Duffy.....	5-7
Gaines.....	5-7

**Pronunciation Guide**

Charel Allen.....	shuh-RELL
Melissa D'Amico.....	duh-MEE-ko
Tulyah Gaines.....	tuh-LIE-uh
Breona Gray.....	bree-ON-uh
Courtney LaVere.....	luh-VEER
Stephanie Menio.....	MANY-o
Chandrica Smith.....	shan-DREE-kuh
Amanda Tsipis.....	SIP-iss
Coquese Washington.....	ko-KWEES
Chaminade-Julienne HS	SHAH-min-ODD
Rancho Cucamonga	KOO-kuh-MUN-guh



Seated (left to right): Amanda Tsipis, Tulyah Gaines, Megan Duffy, Charel Allen, Lindsay Schrader and Breona Gray. Standing (left to right): Crystal Erwin, Melissa D'Amico, Courtney LaVere and Chandrica Smith.

**Numerical**

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.-Exp.	Hometown (High School)
1	Tulyah Gaines	G	5-7	So.-1V	North Las Vegas, Nev. (Cheyenne HS)
2	Charel Allen	G	5-11	So.-1V	Monessen, Pa. (Monessen HS)
11	Amanda Tsipis	G	5-9	So.-1V	Perry, Ohio (Perry HS)
13	Megan Duffy (C)	G	5-7	Sr.-3V	Dayton, Ohio (Chaminade-Julienne HS)
21	Chandrica Smith	F	6-1	Fr.-HS	Stone Mountain, Ga. (Oak Hill Academy (Va.))
24	Lindsay Schrader	G	6-0	Fr.-HS	Bartlett, Ill. (Bartlett HS)
32	Breona Gray	G	5-9	Jr.-2V	Las Vegas, Nev. (Bishop Gorman HS)
33	Melissa D'Amico	C	6-5	So.-1V	Manorville, N.Y. (William Floyd HS)
34	Crystal Erwin	F	6-2	Jr.-2V	Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. (St. Paul HS)
41	Courtney LaVere (C)	F	6-3	Sr.-3V	Ventura, Calif. (Buena HS)

(C) - indicates team captain

**Alphabetical**

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.-Exp.	Hometown (High School)
2	Charel Allen	G	5-11	So.-1V	Monessen, Pa. (Monessen HS)
33	Melissa D'Amico	C	6-5	So.-1V	Manorville, N.Y. (William Floyd HS)
13	Megan Duffy (C)	G	5-7	Sr.-3V	Dayton, Ohio (Chaminade-Julienne HS)
34	Crystal Erwin	F	6-2	Jr.-2V	Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. (St. Paul HS)
1	Tulyah Gaines	G	5-7	So.-1V	North Las Vegas, Nev. (Cheyenne HS)
32	Breona Gray	G	5-9	Jr.-2V	Las Vegas, Nev. (Bishop Gorman HS)
41	Courtney LaVere (C)	F	6-3	Sr.-3V	Ventura, Calif. (Buena HS)
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11	Amanda Tsipis	G	5-9	So.-1V	Perry, Ohio (Perry HS)

(C) - indicates team captain

**Coaching Staff**

Name	Position	Year	Alma Mater	Year Graduated
Muffet McGraw	Head Coach	19th	Saint Joseph's (Pa.)	1977
Coquese Washington	Associate Head Coach	7th*	Notre Dame	1992
Jonathan Tsipis	Assistant Coach	3rd	North Carolina	1996
Angie Potthoff	Assistant Coach	1st	Penn State	1997
Stephanie Menio	Coordinator of Basketball Operations	1st	Pittsburgh	2004

\* - Washington is in her seventh season at Notre Dame and her first as associate head coach.

