

## **SPLINTERS FROM THE PRESSBOX - Paul Fullmer '55**

### **Who Will Win The Starting QB Job?**

Who will it be – Dayne Crist, Tommy Rees, Andrew Hendrix or Everett Golson? That's the question Coach Brian Kelly will have to wrestle with all summer and throughout fall practice.

Last year, Kelly went into the season with only one quarterback he could trust – Crist, who had limited experience the previous year. But Crist quickly went down with a season-ending injury that forced Kelly to play freshman Rees, who did a credible job guiding the Irish to a 7 – 5 season and a Bowl victory over Miami.

Kelly however, makes no secret that he prefers a running QB and neither Crist nor Rees will dazzle opponents with their footwork. So, the door is open for sophomore Hendrix and highly-touted freshman Golson.

In the Blue- Gold game, Hendrix demonstrated his running ability and nose for the end zone. His passes also were better than most anticipated.

There was no doubt that Golson could run (some still think he may be switched this fall to wide receiver to bolster the thin receiving corps, especially if Michael Floyd is not reinstated), but he surprised everyone with the strength of his arm and willingness to hang in the pocket. As an 18-year old recruit, Golson is not likely to get the starting nod from Kelly, who could even red-shirt him since he has protection at quarterback this year.

No doubt Kelly is relieved this year to have four quarterbacks who have demonstrated major league skills to his position last year – Crist and unproven back-ups.

If Crist stays healthy, and that's a big IF, he probably will be under center in the opener against South Florida. Many keen observers in South Bend don't think either Crist or Rees will be the starting quarterback down the line because Kelly will want to see a multi-dimensional athlete leading his team.

### **Notre Dame Players Excel In Classroom**

Notre Dame's athletic programs continued their tradition of academic success last year and posted outstanding graduation rates, according to a report released by the NCAA.

- **All 11 of the University's women's athletic programs posted perfect graduation rates**
- **Nine of the men's athletic programs had graduation success-rate numbers that ranked them 'Best In The Nation' within their sports**
- **Both men's and women's basketball teams had a 100 graduation rate**
- **In football, ND had 96 to finish ahead of Duke and Northwestern at 95**

### **ND Pays Big Bucks To Dump Weis**

There have been lots of numbers thrown around about how much ND had to shell out to get rid of Charlie Weis. Well, the former head football coach not only got a big pay-out but the checks will continue to arrive in his mail box until 2015.

According to University tax documents, Notre Dame made an 'initial termination payment' to Weis of more than 6.6 million.

The documents state that Weis, between his standard compensation as coach until his firing and his 'termination payment', was paid \$7,284,548 from July 2009 through June 2010. Reading these figures can make a true Irish fan weep.

At least former Irish coach Tyrone Willingham seems to be off the books at last, having received \$650,000 for a 'separation agreement' that included payments through December 2009.

Current Coach Kelly's compensation figures were not included on the form because he did not earn enough in 2009 that would make him one of the school's highest paid employees.

Basketball Coach Mike Brey earned \$573,974 in base salary, bonuses and other benefits. He also got \$500,000 from Adidas and Gatorade and \$120,000 from Play By Play Sports, the original name for what has become Notre Dame Sports Properties, the outlet that compensated him for media appearances such as a Coach's Show. Incidentally, Weis got \$1,384,727 from Play By Play Sports!

Women's basketball Coach Muffet McGraw was paid \$643,913 and Athletic Director Jack Swarbrick earned \$932,232. Let's hope Swarbrick doesn't have to sign off on any more 'bloodbath' termination agreements like his predecessor Kevin White authorized. I once asked White about coaches' contracts and he assured me that he had 'escape clauses' in all contracts and ND would never have to give big pay-outs to fire coaches. Obviously, White's definition of 'big' is a lot different than most ND fans. Sure hope that someone upstairs restrains Swarbrick

from giving Kelly or Brey long-term extensions until they have really proven that they can be winners year after year.

Times have changed since 1955 when basketball Coach Johnny Jordan got all of \$12,500.

### **NFL Bypasses Irish Hopefuls**

To demonstrate how poor Charlie Weis' recruiting was, tight end Kyle Rudolph was the only ND player selected in the NFL draft. It is only the fourth time in history that Notre Dame only had one player drafted. Would you believe that Idaho and Appalachian State each ended up with three selections while ND hopefuls like nose tackle Ian Williams, part of the vaunted 2006 recruiting class of deposed Coach Weis, sat for hours waiting for the 'phone to ring?

Go Irish!

Paul 'Splinters' Fullmer

[PSFUL@aol.com](mailto:PSFUL@aol.com)