

## Irish routed by Georgia Tech

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Wow. Simply wow. If you had told me prior to Saturday that the Irish would end up on the short end of the 33-3 stick, I might have had you committed to the Hold Me I™ Irish Hall of Fame. And I do mean committed. Needless to say that™ what happened. As Irish fans we can take solace in knowing that Appalachia State beat the team up North.

Often when reviewing the game film I dissect each player up and down the field. In this case such a critique is difficult since one position was so glaringly deficient, the OFFENSIVE line. Certain observers have been quick to point to the slow and poor decision making of Jones and the even slower trigger of Sharpley as the main causes of 9 sacks coupled with exotic and creative blitz packages by Georgia Tech. However, it™s clear that the problem was the five mules. John Sullivan should be ashamed that as a fifth year student the unit he manages struggled so mightily. Turkovich and Duncan looked confused and overwhelmed against tough match ups. Wenger clearly lacks the chops currently to be the go to run blocker. Young was unremarkable on the right side; for every positive play he had, there were two negative.

The blame should be put at the doorstep of one man, and one man alone, John Latina. Briefly examining the 2006 offensive line we see the problem. The line consisted of: Ryan Harris (4\* recruit, currently with the Denver Broncos), Bob Morton (4\* recruit), John Sullivan (4\* recruit, likely to be a first day draft pick), Dan Santucci (currently with the Cincinnati Bengals), Sam Young (5\* recruit). I mention the current NFLers simply to illustrate the fact that there was plenty of talent on this offensive line last year, and NFL GMs and coaches know it. That group gave up about 35 sacks over the course of the 2006 season with a veteran QB. Quinn was a veteran QB who had the experience to recognize blitzes and to check off to better protection schemes. Those numbers are god-awful. Many naively believed that the 2005 recruiting class featured the offensive lineman Latina wanted and needed to be successful: hard-work, nasty guys. Saturday™s offensive line featured four 4\* recruits and one 5\* recruit, almost all handpicked by Latina and Co. The results were worse, not better, than 2006. The jury isn™t quite in yet for Latina, but the hangman™s noose must be getting tight.

Charlie™s hands aren™t exactly clean either. We can debate the logic behind his game plan. In fact, given the situation a spread option was probably a good idea. However, there is a difference between game planning and play calling. And Weis™ play calling throughout the game left much to be desired. He failed to change his approach once Georgia Tech abandoned any semblance of pass defense. It appeared that Georgia Tech knew, very early on, that Jones was going to be handcuffed and unable to throw the ball. As such they consistently called run blitzes to disrupt our already shaky blocking schemes and timing the option play. At no point did Charlie make use of the occasional hot route, slant, tight end streak, counter, draw, and screen to negate Georgia Tech™s blitzes. The threat of a big play like that might have created more opportunities inside for Jones, Allen, and Aldridge. Throughout the game I wondered if I was watching a Tyrone Willingham coached team, in that the play calling featured little variation or creativity from play to play. Calling the same, or similar plays, over and over again can be successful when a team has the pure talent and technical training. Many teams only do a few things well on offense, but they do them REALLY well. Clearly, this team doesn™t do anything well.

The Sunday Morning Autopsy knows all and sees all, however retrospection and introspection can be a difficult process, especially as the Irish prepare to face an even tougher challenge to come this weekend against the Nittany Lions of Penn State. My daddy use to always say beware leadoff walks, short handed goals, and night games in Happy Valley.

In this humble reporter™s opinion this game will not be remembered for the lopsided loss but for the beginning of two significant eras in Notre Dame football lore. Both Jimmy Clausen and Corwin Brown began their respective careers at Notre Dame. Both appeared ready to become prime-time players, and both will leave an indelible mark on football in South Bend, hopefully for many years to come.