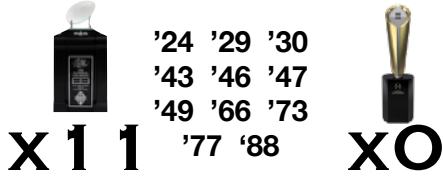




### NOTRE DAME BIO

National Championships - 11



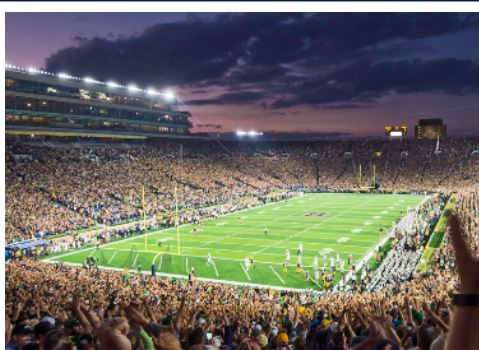
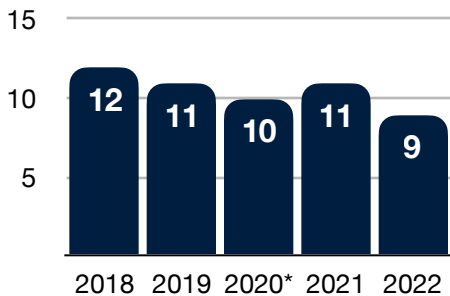
Location: **South Bend, IN**

All-Time Record: **861-320-33**

2022 Results: **9-4**  
**Won Gator Bowl**

Head Coach: **Marcus Freeman**  
2nd Year (9-4)

### 5-YEAR WIN TREND



Notre Dame Stadium (80,795)

## Hartman Brings Playoff Hopes to South Bend

There were certainly some growing pains in Marcus Freeman's first season in South Bend. The opening week loss to Ohio State was disappointing, but understandable. But when Marshall came into Notre Dame Stadium and left with a 26-21 victory all of the panic alarms starting ringing. Brian Kelly had guided the Fighting Irish to five straight double-digit win seasons before departing for LSU and Freeman's squad would have to win every game the rest of the regular season to guarantee reaching the 10-win mark. They didn't, but outside of a sluggish loss to Stanford, Notre Dame did get their season mostly turned around including back to back victories against #16 Syracuse and #5 Clemson.

The offense dealt with inconsistencies, scoring just 18 points per game in their four losses of the regular season compared to the 31.8 points they averaged across the entire year. Quarterback injuries certainly played a role. The Fighting Irish rotated through three different quarterbacks in 2021 and Tyler Buchner emerged from that group as the 2022 starter. Unfortunately, he made it only two games into the season before missing the rest of the season with injury and Drew Pyne played the rest of the way. Both players have since transferred but Freeman made one of the biggest transfer portal splashes in the entire country by bringing in former Wake Forest quarterback **Sam Hartman**. Hartman leaves Winston-Salem as the program's all-time leading passer and his arrival in South Bend sparks anticipation. Notre Dame's biggest challenge will be finding him weapons after superstar tight end Michael Mayer was drafted with his team leading 809 yards. **Yaden Thomas** returns his 362 yards but the next three pass catchers are all gone and there isn't another returner with more than 200 yards. The Fighting Irish will be reliant upon former highly-rated recruits who are talented but inexperienced. **Tobias Merriweather** and **Jaden Greathouse** are two of those players and freshman **Braylon James** could make an impact right away. **Mitchell Evans** and **Holden Staes** will do their best Michael Mayer impression.

Hartman's presence alone should improve the passing game but the rush attack that averaged 189 yards per game last year should be just as strong. **Auric Estime** recorded 920 yards and will easily top 1,000 if he stays healthy and sees more carries now that Logan Diggs (821 yards) departs. **Chris Tyree** plays the slotback position and is a weapon in both run and pass schemes as well as special teams. The offensive line is elite and **Joe Alt** is arguably the best tackle, if not offensive lineman, in the country. **Blake Fisher** is also an NFL-caliber tackle and **Zeke Correll** started all 13 games at center last season.

The defense has been a strength in the past and defensive coordinator Al Gordon has a lot of experience, talent, and depth to work with. Each of the defensive units should be strong and the return of both **JD Bertrand** and **Marist Liufau** will make the linebacker corps a candidate for the strength of the defense. The front seven as a whole should be very disruptive and could even improve upon the 38 sacks from last season. The defensive line got even more dangerous with the addition of Ohio State transfer **Javontae Jean-Baptiste**. The Irish will miss Isaiah Foskey but **Rylie Mills**, **Howard Cross**, and **Jordan Botelho** all made contributions last season. The secondary features not one but two potential lockdown corners in **Cam Hart** and **Benjamin Morrison**. Morrison snagged 6 interceptions which was tied for third in the country behind only Buffalo's Marcus Fuqua and MTSU's Decorian Patterson.

**The Bottom Line:** There's no question in my mind that this Notre Dame team will be improved from last season. The offensive should be much more consistent if not flat out dangerous and I expect the defense has a real shot to hold opponents under 20 points per game for the fifth time in just six seasons. All five of those seasons resulted in double digit wins and that's exactly what I'm predicting for the Fighting Irish. The schedule, however, is a major challenge and could stand between Notre Dame and their Playoff chances. Obviously, the matchups that stand out are games against Ohio State, USC, and Clemson but the Fighting Irish do get the first two at home. However, don't overlook road trips to North Carolina State, Duke, or Louisville and Pittsburgh should also be a quality team this season. The 12-0 best-case scenario does exist and Notre Dame does have the talent and potential to reach such a mark but a much more realistic scenario sees the Fighting Irish going 10-2.

### Projection: 10-2

#### 2022 Statistics

Points Scored <b>31.8</b> 42nd in FBS	Rush Yards <b>189.1</b> 35th in FBS	Pass Yards <b>207.1</b> 97th in FBS	Turnover Margin <b>-3</b> T-85th in FBS
Points Allowed <b>23.0</b> 39th in FBS	Rush YDS Allowed <b>131.3</b> 37th in FBS	Pass YDS Allowed <b>198.0</b> 23rd in FBS	

## 2023 Notre Dame Schedule

Week	Date	Team
0	Sat, Aug 26	 vs. Navy*
1	Sat, Sept 2	 vs. Tennessee St.
2	Sat, Sept 9	 @ NC State
3	Sat, Sept 16	 vs. C. Michigan
4	Sat, Sept 23	 vs. Ohio State
5	Sat, Sept 30	 @ Duke
6	Sat, Oct 7	 @ Louisville
7	Sat, Oct 14	 vs. USC
8	Bye Week	
9	Sat, Oct 28	 vs. Pittsburgh
10	Sat, Nov 4	 @ Clemson
11	Bye Week	
12	Sat, Nov 18	 vs. Wake Forest
13	Sat, Nov 25	 @ Stanford

Conference Games in Bold

### KEY GAMES

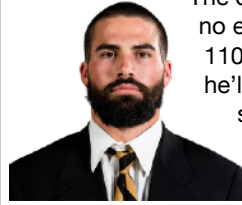
**Sat, Sept 23: vs. Ohio State** - The offense never got going in a Top 5 matchup against the Buckeyes to start the 2022 campaign. Notre Dame expects to be much better this season and they will also benefit from a raucous crowd packed into Notre Dame Stadium. If the defense can disrupt an inexperienced Ohio State quarterback the Irish will have an excellent chance.

**Sat, Oct 14: vs. USC** - The Irish couldn't slow down Caleb Williams last season, will things change at home in 2023 against the defending Heisman winner?

**Sat, Nov 4: @ Clemson** - Notre Dame shocked the country with a 35-14 bludgeoning of Clemson in 2022, giving Freeman a signature win. The Tigers will have revenge on their minds in Death Valley.

### KEY PLAYERS

#### Sam Hartman - QB



The quarterback room quickly went from virtually no experience to a player with 12,967 yards and 110 touchdowns in his career. At the very least he'll help jumpstart a Notre Dame offense that struggled to consistently pass the ball but Hartman and the Irish have their sights set on the final four at the end of the season. If that happens, Hartman would almost certainly be in the Heisman conversation.

#### JD Bertrand - LB

Notre Dame should have one of the best linebacker groups in the country this season and JD Bertrand is largely to thank for that. He followed up a 102-tackle season in 2021 with 82 more in 2022 and he was particularly active in Notre Dame's shocking blowout over Clemson with 12 tackles and a sack. He's strong and decisive and seems to have an anticipatory understanding of where the ball will go and where the play will develop. Sundays will be calling his name soon.



### 2022 RESULTS (9-4)

@ Ohio State (L 10-21)

Marshall (L 21-26)

**California (W 24-17)**

**@ North Carolina (W 45-32)**

**BYU (W 28-20)**

Stanford (L 14-16)

**UNLV (W 44-21)**

**@ Syracuse (W 41-24)**

**Clemson (W 35-14)**

**Navy (W 35-32)**

**Boston College (W 44-0)**

@ USC (L 27-38)

**South Carolina (W 45-38)**

*Irish*

### RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

**12th**

(Via 24/7 Sports)