

# LSU passing game impresses Notre Dame

## Size mismatch one of Weis' chief concerns

By **BRETT MARTEL**  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### NEW ORLEANS

It's the last time LSU's imposing, cannon-armed quarterback and the receiving corps he's dubbed "The Three Musketeers" line up together.

"The three big musketeers," Notre Dame coach Charlie Weis said while discussing the threat posed by LSU's passing attack in Wednesday night's Sugar Bowl.

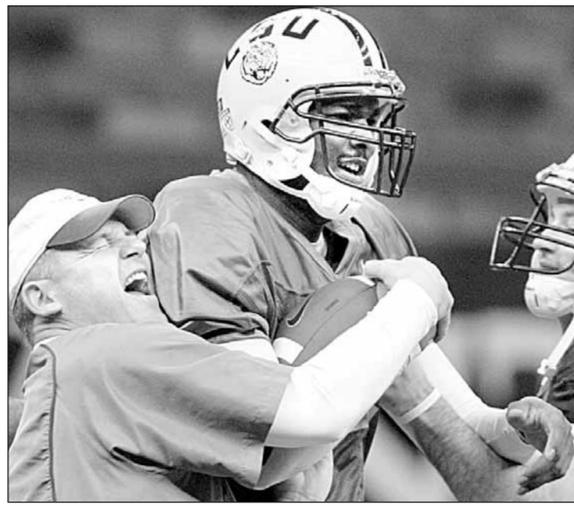
Senior receivers Dwayne Bowe and Craig "Buster" Davis will be gone for certain next season. Quarterback JaMarcus Russell is a strong candidate to finish his career as a junior and enter the next NFL draft. Only Early Doucet, a junior, is expected to be back in the fall.

The four have been playing together regularly for the better part of two full seasons, during which LSU has gone 21-4.

This season, they have combined for 2,355 yards and 23 touchdowns.

The Sugar Bowl against Notre Dame offers a national audience one more look at them, and Weis just hopes they don't make the Fighting Irish look bad.

"One of the reasons why their passing percentage is so high is that these guys make all the plays," Weis said. "It kind of reminds me of several teams that you watch where you just know if you put too much attention on one guy, you've got the other two



AP PHOTO

LSU coach Les Miles, left, tries to take the ball from quarterback JaMarcus Russell during practice in New Orleans on Friday. The No. 4-ranked Tigers will face No. 11-ranked Notre Dame in the Sugar Bowl tonight.

guys that just have field days." Russell has completed 68.5 percent of his passes this season.

All three receivers are not only fast, athletic and make tough catches with consistency but also tend to have size advantages against the defensive backs trying to cover them.

Bowe is listed at 6-foot-3, 217 pounds, Davis at 6-2, 207, and Doucet at 6-0, 206. Notre Dame cornerbacks Mike Richardson and Terrail Lambert both are 5-11, while strong safety Chinedum Ndukwe is 6-2 and free safety Tom Zbikowski is 6-0.

"The receivers are fast, big and can catch a ball anywhere you look," Zbikowski said. "They're real good with the ball when you watch them with the wide receiver screens. They have a lot of yards

after catch. They're a little more physical than other receivers."

Bowe has put up the best numbers of the three with 912 yards and 11 TDs this season. His 25 career touchdowns are the most in school history. He and Russell have combined on 22 of those, a school record for touchdown hookups between a receiver and quarterback.

Using the example of Bowe doing back flips from a standing position, LSU offensive coordinator Jimbo Fisher marvels at the combination of size, quickness and agility he's seen in the Tigers' leading receiver.

"Dwayne is physically very gifted," Fisher said. "He's got the quickness of 190-pound guy with strength and power of big guys." Russell and Bowe compare



### TONIGHT'S GAME

Louisiana State  
Tigers (10-2)  
vs. Notre Dame  
Fighting Irish (10-2)  
Time: 8 tonight  
TV: WXIN-Channel 59  
Radio: ESPN-950 AM

their relationship to that of brothers, and Russell periodically takes Bowe with him on trips home to Mobile, Ala.

They've both talked about the look that Russell gives Bowe while calling plays in clutch situations.

It happened in LSU's most recent home game this season, when the Tigers were on the brink of being upset by Southeastern Conference rival Ole Miss.

Russell called a play that had Bowe running a slant into tight coverage in the end zone. Bowe thought he was not the best option on the play.

But Russell nodded at him in the huddle, so Bowe was ready when Russell rifled the short pass into a small opening for the tying touchdown. LSU won in overtime.

After the game, Bowe asked Russell if he noticed how small the margin for error was on the play.

"He told me, 'When I've got you, I've got you,'" Bowe recalled. "He made a great throw."

Bowe has not been shy about saying he expects to have a big game against Notre Dame, which has been burned badly by several receivers this season.

## Fighting Irish need fast start to keep up with No. 4 Tigers

By **TOM COYNE**  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### NEW ORLEANS

Notre Dame tailback Darius Walker describes falling behind early against top-rated teams as a feeling similar to being choked.

"You have to get someone's hands off your throat, and you're already on the ground and they're on top. That's a hard thing to do," he said.

It's a feeling Walker and the 11th-ranked Fighting Irish hope to avoid when they face No. 4 LSU (10-2) in the Sugar Bowl.

The Irish have fallen behind big early in losses to Michigan and USC as well as in their comeback win against Michigan State.

It's even more important to start fast against an LSU squad that has scored on its first possession eight times and has outscored opponents 122-20 in the first quarter.

The Tigers are rated third in the nation in total defense, 18th in total offense — with JaMarcus Russell third in passing efficiency — and are 8-point favorites in tonight's game.

"You have to make sure the first quarter of the game doesn't get away from you," Notre Dame coach Charlie Weis said.

Weis said part of the problem for the Irish in big games is they have come out too tight.

To combat that, Weis tried to install the game plan over a longer period leading up to the bowl and gave players more freedom to enjoy New Orleans, giving

"I don't know how we'll play, but we are not going to be tight at the start of the game."

Charlie Weis  
Notre Dame football coach on how he expects his team to play in tonight's Sugar Bowl

them later curfews. Weis believes he has that problem solved.

"I don't know how we'll play, but we are not going to be tight at the start of the game," he said.

But the Irish have had other problems in games they've struggled that they need to solve: below average running games, too many sacks, too many turnovers and giving up too many big plays.

Against Michigan, Michigan State, UCLA and USC, the Irish averaged 55.5 yards rushing, compared with averaging 159 yards rushing in other games.

Falling behind early has contributed to the problem because the Irish have had to pass more to try to catch up.

"When you're throwing it on every down, most offensive lines are going to struggle, because the other team's just going to tee off and let it loose," Weis said. "Because once you become one-dimensional, it doesn't matter if you're in Pop Warner (football). ... It becomes a lot easier for those defensive guys to let it loose."

Weis said he also blames himself for calling too many passes.

# College football real winner with Boise State victory

By **BERRY TRAMEL**  
THE OKLAHOMAN (OKLAHOMA CITY)

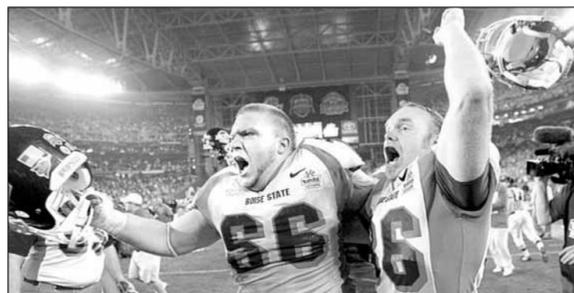
### GLENDALE, Ariz.

After a breathless string of magic and miracles, after two football teams so different in tradition and prestige but not so much in talent and heart waged a game to remember, after Oklahoma and Boise State produced the Fiesta of all Fiestas in the desert, we finally had a winner Monday night.

The little Broncos, kept on the outside of this tradition-rich sport until this amazing night at University of Phoenix Stadium, bested the Sooners 43-42 in overtime in the wildest game you ever will hope to see.

Boise State hero Jared Zabransky called it maybe the greatest game in college football history. That's silly, of course, but I'm taking nominations for any games wilder.

Boise State won it in a manner



AP PHOTO

Boise State's Tad Miller, left, and Sherm Blaser celebrate after the Broncos beat Oklahoma in the Fiesta Bowl in Glendale, Ariz., on Monday night.

that maybe only Oklahomans can appreciate. The Broncos were victimized by Sooner Magic, as Ohio State and Nebraska and so many others had been so many times before.

But Boise State saw that magic and trumped it with a miracle of its own, a 50-yard touchdown play with seven seconds left on the old hook-and-lateral.

Remember that, Oklahoma fans? What's good for the goose

in 1976 against Nebraska is good to cook a goose 30 years later.

Then in overtime, more tricks. A two-point conversion play that was part Statue of Liberty and part hidden-ball trick and all guile by rookie Boise State coach Chris Petersen, who was sn't afraid to lose and was rewarded with victory.

And never again will college football look at the little guy the same. Never again can an un-

beaten Boise State or TCU or Brigham Young be written off for weak schedules. All they ask for is a chance.

That chance came to Boise State, and the Broncos made the most of it by slaying the Big 12 champion.

"We felt like we belonged here all along," Petersen said. "We really did. I think a lot of people felt we belonged here. That's why you play the game. You've got to go out there and prove it."

George Mason University last week took out a full-page ad in the Idaho Statesman, congratulating Boise State and wishing the Broncos well in the Fiesta Bowl. George Mason rocked college basketball in the spring by making the Final Four.

Boise State trumped George Mason with this victory. Some questioned whether the Broncos deserved a BCS bid. But they proved it in passes Monday night against an Oklahoma team that played poorly much of the game but with great heart late.

Despite the way the Sooners

played, this was not a game they lost. This was a game Boise State won.

This is a game that will gnaw at Sooners coach Bob Stoops, giving up such an easy score with the game seemingly in hand. And Stoops will be right; a defense should never be so victimized.

But the 50-yard hook-and-lateral — quarterback Jared Zabransky to Drisan James to Jerard Rabb — was a play for the ages. It was a play so big, it made you almost forget the epic finish by the Sooners.

The 77-yard touchdown drive directed by Paul Thompson and 2-point conversion pass. Marcus Walker's 33-yard interception return for a touchdown with 1:02 left, which but for Boise State's charm is a play that would rank among the greatest in Sooner lore.

Truth is, Oklahoma didn't lose this game with its defensive lapses against Petersen's bag of tricks. The Sooners lost this one with 55 minutes of lethargic play.

Oklahoma looked in this bowl game just like it did the previous

two BCS trips, losses to LSU in the Sugar and Southern Cal in the Orange. The Sooners seemed out of it. Mistakes galore, uninspired play.

But Oklahoma's finish made this a memorable Fiesta and at least gives the Sooners something to build upon.

In Miami two years ago, Oklahoma quit early. This game could have been equally embarrassing, getting blown out by Boise State, but the Sooners not only didn't quit, they pulled back ahead.

Truth is, this was the wildest Oklahoma game in memory. Nothing really compares. Not Ohio State in 1977. Not Oklahoma State in 1983. Not any game.

Near the end, Glendale police trotted out officers on horseback to line the field. What in the world for? Who had energy left to rush the field or celebrate or do anything but marvel at what a wondrous game this was.

Berry Tramel writes for The Oklahoman in Oklahoma City. Send comments to btramel@oklahoman.com.

## Distance

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

benefit people with disabilities.

Every summer, 35 undergraduates and alumni cycle 800 miles through 13 cities in Push America's Gear Up Florida campaign.

Last year, the program raised more than \$75,000 through team-member fund raising and corporate sponsorships.

For McGarvey, a freshman at Indiana State, helping people with disabilities hits close to home. He has a mentally disabled aunt who lives in Ireland.

"When I heard about the opportunity to help people like her, it was just one of those things that I needed to be a part of," he said.

Gear Up Florida's route zig-zags across the state with stops in Tampa Bay, Naples, Orlando and Jacksonville.

The trek begins in Miami on May 12 and ends in the state's capital May 26.

Bicycling will be done primarily in the morning. Once the cyclists have reached their destination for the day, they spend time with local organizations that assist people with disabilities.

The cyclists will eat dinner, go to dances and play basketball at designated stops on their route.

At the end of each stop, the cyclists will present the local organization with a donation.

"Most people are sympathetic and feel bad and donate money," McGarvey said. "Push America's big thing is that we're empathetic and want to promote what people with disabilities can do and some advantages they have in life."

McGarvey's cycling trip through Florida won't be the first

time the Center Grove area resident has lent a helping hand to people with disabilities.

Last summer, while stationed in Biloxi, Miss., McGarvey sponsored a Special Olympics athlete during the Mississippi State Special Olympics.

The man stayed with McGarvey for three days on the Air Force base during the competition, and the experience left McGarvey wanting to help even more.

"For three days we took him around the base, and we showed him what the military dorms are like, and he showed us what he did, how he interacts with people," McGarvey said. "We got to meet his family and hear about his experiences."

"We only had him for three days, but I got a whole new point of view from that experience."

While helping others isn't new to McGarvey, cycling is. He's only been at it for six weeks.

McGarvey prefers to ride his bike four times a week, but because of the winter weather, he's been restricted to two or three times a week.

His typical ride is 10 miles long, but when May rolls around, McGarvey will have to be able to bike 100 miles a day.

His longest one-day ride to date is 17 miles.

McGarvey — the older brother of the Center Grove football team's All-State kicker/punter Ian McGarvey — said he is confident he'll be able to reach the 100-mile plateau with time and training.

"Right now, I can't do it," he said. "But I'll be able to work myself to get there. I have a fraternity brother that has already done it, and he's pushing me the whole way."

"I know I'll get there, but right now, it seems pretty surreal."

## Duke case prosecutor sworn in

The Associated Press

### DURHAM, N.C.

The embattled prosecutor pursuing the Duke University lacrosse sexual assault case was sworn in to office Tuesday in a private courthouse ceremony.

Reporters weren't allowed to view the ceremony for District Attorney Mike Nifong and were barred from the building until 8:30 a.m., when it officially opened. Durham County (N.C.) Sheriff Worth Hill confirmed the ceremony had taken place.

"The whole point of this was this was not a media event," Nifong said later. He said he wants to be part of the healing process.

"If we get to the point where it appears that my presence in an investigation or anything like that is a hindrance, then we can deal with that at that time," he said. "But I've been elected to do a job, and I intend to do that job."

Nifong, who had been appointed to the office in 2005, won election in November, but his handling of the case against the three lacrosse players accused of assaulting a dancer at a team party has generated intense criticism.

Last week, the North Carolina State Bar filed ethics charges against Nifong. He was accused of violating professional rules by making misleading and inflammatory comments about the three lacrosse players.

# WE'RE BACK!

## Greenwood American Legion

### THURSDAY, 1/4/2007

**Early Bird 6:15**  
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## Elvis' Birthday Celebration Package

### Saturday, January 6, 2007

All-inclusive Package: **Only \$156\* couple**

- Elvis' Memorabilia Welcome Gift -
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- The "King's" Dinner Buffet -
- Chuckwagon Soup & Salad Bar, Country-fried Chicken, Pecan-crusted Catfish, Southern-style Memphis Meatloaf, Smoked BarBQ Baby-Carved Ribs, Real Mashed Taters, vegetables? - Extravagant Dessert Bar.
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- Starring "Bruce Borders" & The City Council Band
- Drawings for valuable Elvis Collectibles at Intermission
- Cocktail Service and Concessions available
- The "King's" Breakfast Buffet -
- Fresh fruits, Scrambled Eggs and Toppings Bar, Hunka-Hunka Hoosier Carved Ham, Fried Peanut butter & Banana French Toast, Southern fried Taters, Biscuits & Gravy, Biloxi Bread Pudding and much more...

Thank You, Thank You Very Much!

The "King's" Buffets served in the Harvest Dining Room  
Dinner Buffet served 4:30 to 8:30pm Saturday, January 6  
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