

# Sports

## Notre Dame on A&M's tradition level Horsemen, the Gipper among Irish legends

By Anthony Wilson  
Sports Writer

Tradition and folklore. Notre Dame may be the only university in the nation that can rival Texas A&M in those two categories. The famed fables of The Four Horsemen, Knute Rockne, the Gipper and Touchdown Jesus has always fascinated and intrigued me. So when Notre Dame alumnus and author Robert Quakenbush sent a copy of his 1985 book "The Gipper's Ghost" to *The Battalion* sports staff, I snatched it up and read it.

### Viewpoint

"The Gipper's Ghost" is a fictional story set in the future. The once-proud Fighting Irish football team has been reduced to the laughing stocks of college football, losing 22 straight games with no hope in sight. The Catholic school's "Number One Fan," God Almighty, who also completed the first successful Hail Mary, says enough is enough and decides the time is right for a little divine intervention.

The Big G sends down guardian angels Knute Rockne, Notre Dame's greatest coach, and George Gipp, Notre Dame's greatest player, to salvage the hapless Irish. For the assignment, Gipp is sent in from the spiritual sideline known as Purgatory, where he is temporarily staying

for spending too much time in South Bend, Ind.'s pool halls instead of its classrooms.

Back on campus, Rockne takes the identity of Father Rock, the team's new chaplain. Gipp returns as a student and chooses the name Dutch Reagan, in homage to Ronald Reagan who played Gipp in the 1940 Warner Bros. movie "Knute Rockne — All American."

Father Rock arranges for the coach to discover Dutch playing in an intramural game and the rest, as they say, is history. The Irish win the rest of their games, but have to win their final regular season game without Dutch. God puts the whammy on Dutch in the Penn State game and lets a linebacker break his leg. So the team has to look deep within themselves after an inspiring speech by Father Rock, a la Rockne. They pull out the win against Southern California, which is to Notre Dame what t.u. is to A&M.

They lock up the national championship when they beat Louisiana State (WHOO!) in the Sugar Bowl.

It's an amusing story, but the most enjoyable parts of the book are the true legendary Notre Dame tales.

The most famous player ever to play at Notre Dame was tailback George Gipp. Although he never played high school football, between 1917-1920 Gipp rushed for 2,314 yards, a school record that stood for

58 years, and 21 touchdowns. He led the team in passing and rushing all three years. In that era, players had to play both ways, both offense and defense. Gipp also excelled on defense. Gipp never allowed a pass to be completed in his area.

After his final game, he contracted strep throat, a serious disease in the 1920s. The entire student body kept vigils outside his hospital, praying for his recovery. He died on Dec. 14, 1920, two weeks after being named Notre Dame's first All-American.

However, Gipp was far from being finished having an impact on Notre Dame football. In 1928, as legend has it, Knute Rockne's team was playing an undefeated Army team in front of a crowd of 90,000 at Yankee Stadium in New York City. The Irish had lost two games and things looked grim. Before the game in the locker room, Rockne stood up in front of his team and gave his famous "Win one for the Gipper" speech:

"Boys, I'm going to tell you something I've kept to myself for years. None of you here knew George Gipp. He was long before your time. But you all do know what his tradition stands for at Notre Dame.

"Well, the last thing he said to me was, 'Rock, sometime when the team is up against it, when things are wrong and the breaks are beating the boys, tell them to go in there with

all they've got, and win just one for the Gipper. I don't know where I'll be then, Rock,' he said. 'But I'll know about it, and I'll be happy.' That's all boys."

Supposedly by the time Rockne finished speaking, a dry eye was not to be found. When Notre Dame tailback Jack Chevigny scored the Irish's first touchdown, he threw the ball in the air and said, "That was one for the Gipper." The Irish went on to beat the Cadets 12-6. The final seconds ticked off the clock as Notre Dame held Army on a goal line stand.

In 13 seasons at Notre Dame, from 1918 to 1930, Rockne established himself as the benchmark against which all other college coaches are measured. Rockne won 105 games, lost 12 and tied five. He had five undefeated seasons and three national championships.

He might have won a fourth championship if he hadn't been killed in a tragic plane crash at the age of 43. No coach, pro or college, had ever surpassed his winning percentage in major competition.

Perhaps the most famous football backfield to ever lace up high tops and strap on leather facemask-less helmets was the Four Horsemen of Notre Dame.

The backfield got its nickname from sports writer Grantland Rice in

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## 10 Commandments of Notre Dame and A&M

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Sports Writer

Former Notre Dame head coach Knute Rockne returns to South Bend, Ind. from Heaven to help uplift the Irish's sagging football program in Robert Quakenbush's "The Gipper's Ghost."

### Column

To aid in the effort, Notre Dame's "No. 1 Fan," better known as God, gives Rockne, who takes the name Father Rock, two stone tablets with some inscriptions to inspire the lads.

They are the TEN COMMANDMENTS OF NOTRE DAME and go something like this:

• The first commandment — Thou shalt not tarnish the image of Notre Dame.

• The second commandment — Thou shalt always remember the importance of alumni contributions, and score touchdowns accordingly.

• The third commandment — Re-

member to always keep protected thy quarterback.

• The fourth commandment — Honor thy coach.

• The fifth commandment — Thou shalt not fumble.

• The sixth commandment — Thou shalt not get caught in the act of committing a needless penalty.

• The seventh commandment — Thou shalt not sell thy Notre Dame football tickets above their actual face value.

• The eighth commandment — Thou shalt not be a hot dog.

• The ninth commandment — Thou shalt not covet thy opponent's cheerleaders. (The Aggies shouldn't have to worry about the Irish doing that. I seriously doubt Timmy Brown will be trying to set up a date with a yell leader after the game in Dallas.)

• The tenth commandment — Thou shalt never lose to USC.

Not to be outdone by Quakenbush and the Irish, the sports staff here at *The Battalion* has devised its

own set of words to live by for the A&M football team. Here are our TEN COMMANDMENTS OF TEXAS A&M:

• The first commandment — Thou shalt not sit, wear hats or boo the quarterback during a game.

• The second commandment — Thou shalt always remember the megabucks Old Ags contribute (AMEN, BROTHER!), and make yearly trips to Dallas on Jan. 1 accordingly.

• The third commandment — Thou shalt remember the second commandment.

• The fourth commandment — Thou shalt not have a Mr. Potato Head lookalike (under the guise of Old Sarge) terrorizing little children on the sidelines while masquerading as a mascot.

• The fifth commandment — Thou shalt not let the kicker make tackles on kickoff returns.

• The sixth commandment — Thou shalt extend a friendly invita-

tion to bands whose schools' football teams have been caught screwing up big time.

• The seventh commandment — When the Ags score, so wilt thou.

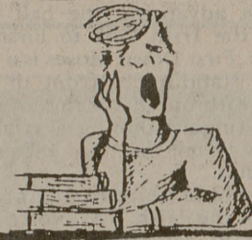
• The eighth commandment — Thou shalt not wiggle in the end zone and stand with arms crossed after scoring a touchdown.

• The ninth commandment — Thou shalt not doubt Jackie, who in his infinite wisdom, finds a way to win.

• The 10th commandment — Thou shalt never lose to t.u. (Not that we ever lose to anyone. We just get, uh... outscored.)

Of course penance can be made if any of these commandments are broken. They can be bought in the form of Cotton Bowl tickets which go on sale for \$25 at 7 a.m. Monday at the ticket offices of G. Rollie White Coliseum. The normal procedure for buying tickets, with seniors and graduate students obtaining tickets on Monday, will be in effect.

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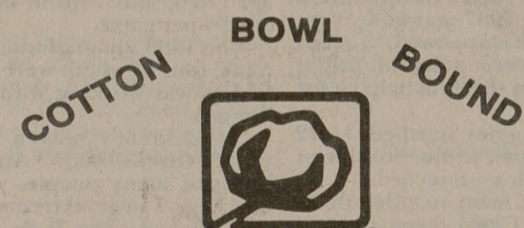
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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The State Department of Highways and Public Transportation will hold a Public Hearing concerning the proposed highway construction on State Highway 21 from the Little Brazos River east to the Texas A&M Annex; State Highway 47 from the Texas A&M Annex south to Farm to Market Road 60; Farm to Market Road 60 from Farm to Market Road 2818 west to the Brazos River; and Farm to Market Road 1688 from the end of existing Farm to market Road 1688 south and west to Farm to Market Road 60. The meeting will be held in Assembly Room No. 2 at the Brazos Center at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 15, 1987. Maps and other drawings showing the proposed locations and designs will be displayed at the public hearing together with environmental assessments on each project. The State Relocation Assistance Program, the benefits and services for displacees, and information concerning the relocation assistance office will be discussed. Tentative schedules for right of way acquisition and construction will also be discussed. All interested citizens are invited to attend this public hearing. Verbal and written comments from the public regarding the projects are requested. Comments may be presented either at the hearing or may be submitted to Mr. Carol D. Zeigler, District Engineer, at P.O. Box 3249, Bryan, Texas 77805, but must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. December 28, 1987.



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