

Antsy, Notre Dame fires coach Tyrone Willingham

SOUTHBEND, Ind. (AP) — Coach Tyrone Willingham was fired by Notre Dame on Tuesday after three seasons in which he failed to return one of the nation's most storied football programs to prominence.

Willingham went 21-15, including 6-5 this season. The Fighting Irish lost 41-10 to No. 1 Southern California on Saturday.

"We simply have not made the progress on the field that we need to make," athletic director Kevin White said. "Nor have we been able to create the positive momentum necessary in our efforts to return the Notre Dame program to the elite level of the college football world."

Players are considering not playing in the Insight Bowl on Dec. 28, and White said he didn't know who would coach the game. Notre Dame accepted the invitation to the game on Sunday.

Willingham's firing comes after a season in which the Irish pulled off upset vic-

tories over Michigan and Tennessee but also were beaten badly by USC and Purdue. Student groups were planning a protest on campus Tuesday evening to call for Willingham's firing; he faced criticism from fans much of the season.

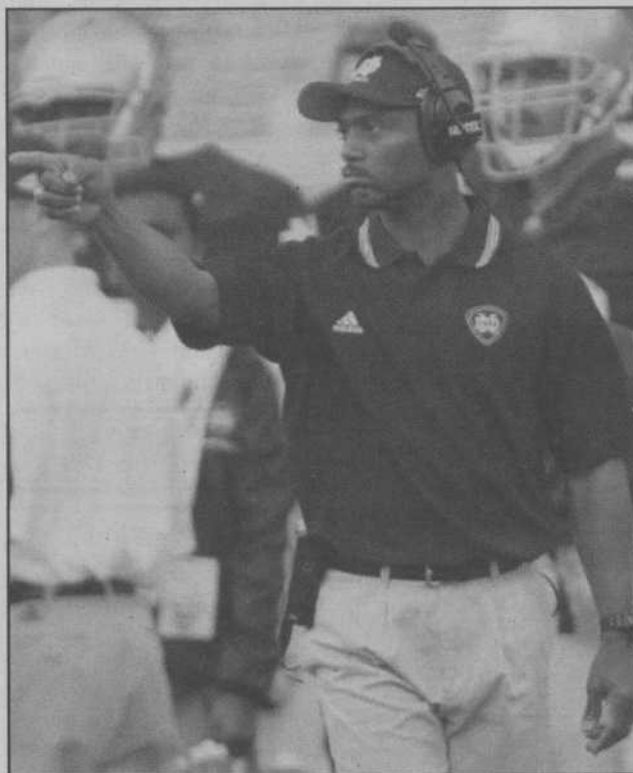
White praised Willingham's handling of the team, especially the Irish's strong academic record.

"From Sunday through Friday our football program has exceeded all expectations, in every way," he said. "But on Saturday, we've struggled. We've been up and down and sideways a little bit."

White and Willingham met with some players Tuesday to tell them of the firing.

"As a player, you think it's our fault. We didn't get the job done," senior tight end Jared Clark said. "I think coach Willingham was a great coach and I enjoyed playing under him."

Notre Dame's loss to USC on Saturday marked the fifth time the Irish lost by 31 points



Tyrone Willingham became one of two Notre Dame football coaches in the last 75 years to coach for only three years.

or more under Willingham — including three against the rival Trojans.

By comparison, former coach Bob Davie's team had just one such loss; Lou Holtz

and Dan Devine had none.

Notre Dame hired Willingham, the first Black head coach in any sport for the Irish, from Stanford to replace George O'Leary. The former Georgia Tech coach resigned five days after taking the job because he lied about his academic and athletic achievements on his re-

sume.

With Tony Samuel fired by New Mexico State and Fitz Hill resigning from San Jose State last week, there are now only two Black head coaches in Division I-A: Karl Dorrell at UCLA and Sylvester Croom at Mississippi State.

Floyd Keith, executive director of the Black Coaches Association, said he was disappointed with Notre Dame's decision.

"In three years, I think he has done everything, short of winning a national championship and I don't think he inherited national championship talent," Keith said.

In his first season, Willingham had many fans recalling Notre Dame's glory days, taking over a losing squad and turning things around immediately.

The Irish won eight straight games to start the season before finishing 10-3 and going to the Gator Bowl.

But during his second year, the Irish fell to 5-7, with four of their losses coming by 26 points or more. It was Notre Dame's third losing record in five seasons, the team's worst stretch in 115

years of football.

One coach certain to be mentioned as a possible replacement for Willingham is Utah's Urban Meyer, an Irish assistant during 1996-2000. The Utes are 11-0 and ranked No. 5 in their second year under Meyer.

Meyer said he hadn't heard about Willingham's departure from Notre Dame until he was asked about it by The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Asked whether he has had any contact with Notre Dame or whether he would be interested in coaching the Fighting Irish, Meyer responded: "I won't comment on it."

Notre Dame has won eight AP college football national championships, more than any other school, with the last in the 1988 season under Holtz.

Players from the school have won the Heisman Trophy seven times, also the most in college football.

But the Irish haven't won a bowl game since ending the 1993 season ranked No. 2 after beating Texas A&M 24-21 in the Cotton Bowl. Since then, the Irish have lost six straight postseason games.

Sports Pace

(Continued from Page 15) really fight and laid on the ropes for ten rounds.

Before last weekend's controversy, the resulting announcements of the winner of many bouts have been questioned, especially by the participants — and, perhaps, rightly so. The scores of

rounds 11 and 12 were just the opposite of what this writer thought, as all three judges gave them to Morales instead of Barrera.

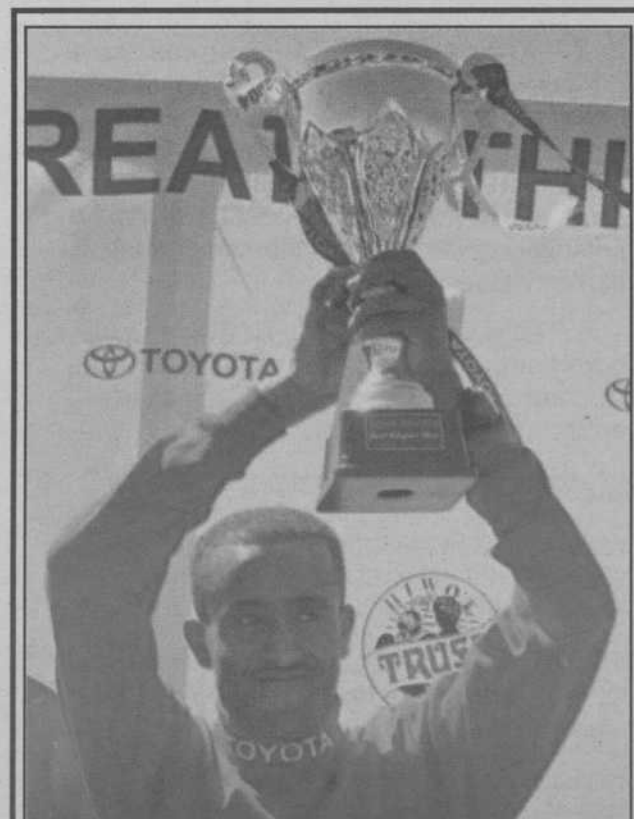
Fighters like Tommy Hearn, who thought his draw with Ray Leonard was actually a win for him, and Marvelous Marvin Hagler, who

gave up his career after Leonard was given the decision in their 1987 bout, would have been helped if they could have seen a scoreboard during the bout.

Although Erik Morales stated he wouldn't say he was "robbed", he did say he thought he won the fight with Barrera and the judges were wrong. He didn't, however, go as far as his promoter to say there was a rule denying the scoring of even rounds.

Jose Morales, the fighter's father, complained that Barrera had been allowed by the referees to hit his son behind the head in each of their three bouts. During this bout, however, referee Kenny Bayless warned Barrera several times about rabbit punches and almost took points from him because of the illegal activity.

Although boxing in this country is in its 100th year, the scoring still leaves a lot to the imagination. And not only should it have a reigning commissioner, like in other sports, but also a better scoring system to keep the controversial outcomes to a minimum. Post the scores round by round. Tell the world who is winning, when he is winning. The people need to be informed when the outcome is in doubt.



ROAD WARRIOR

Ethiopia's Abera Dinkessa holds his cup as he won Africa's largest ever road race, the Great Ethiopian Run in Addis Ababa on Sunday. More than 20,000 people participated at the 10 kilometres run through the capital.

Whistleblower

(Continued from Page 4)

achievement that the nation's schools can ill afford," the National School Boards Association writes in its friend-of-the-court filing.

Unlike colleges and universities, public high schools are not required under federal law to disclose data on how they are funding their athletic programs. As a result, monitoring of these programs — of which 42 percent of the participants are girls — is largely left to school boards and activists, advocates say.

For Jackson, the disparities between the girls' and boys' teams were immediately apparent after he started work at Ensley High School in 1999.

Besides using an old gym with no heat, the

girls sometimes rode to games in teachers' and parents' cars while the boys always used a bus, and the girls' team didn't get any money from ticket or concession sales.

After pushing for changes in letters and meetings with school officials, Jackson said his job evaluations soon got worse, and he was removed as coach in May 2001. He remained on the payroll as a teacher.

Jackson eventually was rehired last year as coach on an interim basis, and the old gym now has two new, regulation-sized hoops. Birmingham school officials have declined to say why he was initially removed.

The case is Jackson v. Birmingham Board of Education, 02-1672.

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