

## 2008 Notre Dame Fighting Irish College Football Predictions

Contributed by Jimmy Boyd  
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It was about as bad as it could be for the storied Notre Dame Fighting Irish in 2007. A miserable 3-9 season opened up the team to a whirlwind of negative media attention. Online sportsbook BetUS.com has the Notre Dame Fighting Irish +6500 odds to win the 2009 BCS Championship. Things should be better in 2008 and the Irish could return to elite status as soon as 2009. Find out what Expert Football Handicapper Jimmy Boyd thinks we can expect from the Irish in his 2008 Notre Dame Fighting Irish College Football Predictions article for Point-Spreads.com.

**Offense** - This side of the ball was atrocious last season. The Irish ranked 116th in the nation in scoring, 115th in rushing, 110th in passing, and 119th in total offense. This hardly seemed possible for a team with another highly rated recruiting class and highly regarded play-caller Charlie Weis calling the shots. But it was obvious that freshman QB Jimmy Clausen, running backs Robert Hughes and Armando Allen, and wide receiver Duval Kamara were not ready to play high-level college football. Weis has handed over the play calling duties to offensive coordinator Michael Haywood. That likely won't make a big difference, but it will allow Weis to manage more areas of his team. What the Irish really need is big improvements from Clausen, who completed just 138 of 245 passes last season. But we can't pin it all on Clausen. The line allowed a school-record 58 sacks a season ago. Four starters return from this unit and we should see an improvement in physical play and confidence. It still seems like a ways off, but the combination of Clausen to Kamara could be something special in 2009.

**Defense** - The addition of former Georgia Tech coordinator Jon Tenuta, highly regarded as having one of the best defensive minds in football, brings in an aggressive attacking style of defense. Having to replace defensive lineman Trevor Laws, now with the Philadelphia Eagles, will be no easy task. His absence alone weakens the front line which allowed nearly 200 rushing yards per game considerably. Tenuta will use lots of blitzes and show different looks to keep their opponents guessing. Better strategizing should keep this unit respectable. Fifth-year senior and two-time team captain, Maurice Crum, will be doing plenty of blitzing from the linebacker spot. A speedy and aggressive secondary is Notre Dame's deepest and best group. The Irish finished second in the nation in passing yards allowed last season. Senior David Bruton is one of the nation's finest safeties.

**Special Teams** - Brandon Walker is going to have to do better kicking field goals than he did in his freshman campaign. He made just six of 12 last season. Junior walk-on Eric Maust will handle the punting duties.

College Football Predictions on the 2008 - The Irish won't be as bad as they were in 2007, but their schedule is no cake walk. They'll have to win some games against good teams if they hope to reach the .500 mark. I think we'll see a year making a big difference for the Irish with the 2009 season being when they get back to the bowls.

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BetUS.com has posted college football predictions betting odds to win the 2009 BCS Championship:

LSU +1200

Southern Cal +300

California +4500

Ohio State +1000

Wisconsin +3000

Boston College +12500

Florida +600

Kentucky +10000

South Florida +5000

Oklahoma +900

Georgia +900

West Virginia +1600  
Oregon +4500  
Virginia Tech +1400  
Texas +1200  
Missouri +1400  
South Carolina +4500  
Arizona State +4000  
Rutgers +8000  
Clemson +2000  
Nebraska +7500  
Cincinnati +8000  
UCLA +6000  
Miami Florida +6000  
Florida State +5000  
Michigan State +7500  
Kansas +3000  
Kansas State +10000  
Alabama +5000  
Auburn +2000  
Louisville +8000  
Notre Dame +6500  
Oklahoma State +12000  
Penn State +5000  
Tennessee +3000  
Texas A&M +10000  
Texas Tech +5000  
Wake Forest +10000  
Washington +10000  
Iowa +10000  
Illinois +3300  
Georgia Tech +10000  
Pittsburgh +8000