

Chapter 21: The Crowning Glory

When Knute Rockne stepped off the train in Tucson, he looked up at a bright blue sky and broke into a wide grin, rubbing his hands together in anticipation. Finally they had encountered the mild weather he had hoped for. Minutes later, after a member of the welcoming committee gave him the schedule of receptions, dinners and banquets, his mood darkened. Rockne thought that his club was already showing the physical and psychological effects of too many feasts on the trip and that the players needed a different regimen. His hosts explained that special care was being taken to feed his players healthy food and allow them plenty of rest, and he again smiled and gave his approval.

The stop in Tucson was originally scheduled for two days, December 29 and 30, but with El Paso off the itinerary, the team would spend four days in the Arizona city. No place on the tour was more excited to be hosting the Irish. In early December, representatives of Tucson and the University of Arizona lobbied Notre Dame officials to consider taking the Southern Pacific route west and to spend some time in their area. The effort was led by several local Notre Dame alumni, including James D. Barry, a former classmate of Rockne's, John B. Wright, and Jim Robbins. The university offered thorough accommodations, including use of all its athletic facilities, especially its well-maintained football field. Coach J. Fred "Pop" McHale, who had guided the school's football team since 1914, was known and respected by Rockne.

The chef at the Santa Rita hotel, Notre Dame's headquarters, was given instructions on what to prepare for the players. Each player's diet was to be strictly monitored, and even the banquets would consist of simple foods. The players could purchase cigars for souvenirs, but they were expected to refrain from smoking them.

The team's train pulled into Tucson early Saturday morning, December 27, and by the afternoon, 1,500 local fans were watching the Irish at their first workout on the university field. A simple meal followed, and the players were in bed by 9 p.m. On Sunday, the team attended mass said by Father O'Hara at the Cathedral. Originally, there was no practice scheduled for Sunday, but Rockne decided to add one to make the best use of the good weather and available time. "We have been giving alibis for four days," the coach scolded his players. "We are going to get down to business. We've got a reputation to uphold and we are going to win from that coast gang." The players practiced blocking, tackling and running back kicks. For the final portion of the workout, the stands were cleared of onlookers so that the Irish could practice some plays they planned to use against Stanford. After the session, Rockne expressed satisfaction with the workout, saying his players were returning to form.

The local press hailed the Irish players as regular college students who happened to play football well; many had their school books along, preparing for final examinations which awaited them in mid- January back on campus.

Monday morning before breakfast, members of the squad visited San Xavier Mission. The main activity was a sight-seeing trip of the area in automobiles provided by the local

Studebaker agency. The boys were well-rested and prepared for a good workout at the university. Under clear skies, with the air crisp and the field dry and fast, the Irish started to look like themselves again. The hundreds of onlookers marveled at the team's speed as it ran through rapid-fire signal drills.

One after another, the three teams of Notre Dame gridders exploded from a standstill, breaking away from the shift into an array of quick- strike moves against imaginary defenders. Rockne, now more relaxed as his players started fitting in solid workouts, spoke at a luncheon of the local Rotary club, where he expressed his thanks to the Tucson hosts and his relief at the excellent weather. In the evening, the formal banquet at the Santa Rita hotel brought out a large crowd of well- wishers led by the local alumni. Adam Walsh spoke for the players, thanking Tucson and noting that the banquet was just the right style for the team. Bishop Daniel Gercke predicted not only a victory over Stanford, but victories in life for the Irish players because of the training they received at Notre Dame. They would become known as Christian gentlemen as well as football players. The banquet ended with the Irish team and alumni singing the Victory March, much to the delight of locals who had never heard the song. The event ended promptly at 9 p.m., which allowed the Irish another good night's sleep.

On Tuesday, December 30, the final day in Tucson, Rockne addressed a regular meeting of the Pima County Bar Association. The dozen members of the Irish squad who were studying law were introduced at the meeting. In the afternoon, the Irish had their final workout at the University of Arizona before their departure at 5:30 p.m. When asked about the late departure for a game less than 48 hours away, Rockne replied, "We are not anxious to get to the scene of our game too early. There are too many people around (in Los Angeles) and we can get better practice here without the final excitement of the contest. Many people say that we are overconfident, but we are not. We recognize flatly that the Stanford game is the greatest of the season. We expect to win, if Stanford is as good as reports indicate, we will be satisfied to win by a score of 3 to 0."

The Irish received a rousing sendoff from hundreds of their new- found friends in Tucson. The high school band played the Victory March and the players were showered with confetti as they boarded the train. "While in the city," the local paper declared, "the Notre Dame party won a host of friends and supporters. Tucson...is backing Notre Dame players to win by a good margin." The new fans were excited to learn that the play-by-play returns of the game were to be announced in front of the Tucson Opera House.

The Notre Dame special had an extra car as it left Tucson. Angus McDonald, the Southern Pacific executive and former Notre Dame star athlete, added his private car to the team's train. McDonald, a member of the university's board of trustees and former president of the alumni association, was looking forward to accompanying the team to San Francisco after the Tournament of Roses, as he had come to Notre Dame in the 1890s from his hometown of Oakland.

In Glenn Scobey "Pop" Warner of Stanford, the Irish would face one of the most experienced, accomplished and innovative coaches in college football history. The wily veteran had seen almost everything in his 30 years as a college coach – and much he had

developed himself. The spiral pass, the spiral punt, numbered plays, the dummy scrimmage, the double-wing formation, the unbalanced line were all the creative work of Warner. When he enrolled at Cornell in 1891, he was among the oldest freshmen, a fact which earned him the nickname "Pop." He starred at guard for Cornell from 1892-94, boxed as a heavyweight and earned a law degree before he started his coaching career with brief stints at Georgia and his alma mater.

His coaching genius first appeared when he came to the tiny Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. There, he took boys unschooled in the sport and turned out one impressive team after another, taking on much larger schools that were far advanced in the game. At Carlisle, he coached one of the all-time greats, Jim Thorpe. His careful guidance of the talented star helped Thorpe become a name feared and respected throughout football.

In 1915, he moved on to the University of Pittsburgh, where he posted a mark of 60-12-4 in the next nine seasons. Warner was credited with developing more plays than any other man in football history. His arsenal was so deep, it was said, he could use a given play just once every few years, and coaches far and wide would wonder where this "new" play had been hiding. In 1923, he had his worst spell with the Panthers, losing four straight games. It was reported that he was coaching "with another offer signed in his pocket." Warner resigned at season's end to move west and take the reigns at Stanford, where he succeeded Andy Kerr but kept the well-liked coach as his top assistant.

In coming to Palo Alto, Warner inherited one of the great talents in the game – fullback Ernie Nevers. From his earlier days while starring for Superior Central High School in Wisconsin, Nevers had grown into an all-around player of great strength and skill.

Ernest Nevers was born on June 11, 1902 in Willow River, Minnesota, the youngest of George and Mary Nevers' seven children. The family worked in and operated hotels, dining rooms and boarding houses, and had lived in several locations in and around the western end of Lake Superior in Ontario, Wisconsin and Minnesota. While at Superior, young Ernie excelled in basketball as well as football, and nearly accepted an offer to enter the University of Wisconsin to play basketball. Instead, he moved with his family to Santa Rosa, California, where he attended high school another year before entering Stanford in 1922.

Nevers developed into an outstanding college back under Kerr in 1922 and 1923. Great things were expected when Warner took over as Stanford's coach. Warner's offense was designed to get the ball into Nevers' hands nearly every play. He was almost unstoppable as a bruising running back, accomplished as a passer and punter and ferocious on defense.

In 1924, Nevers was also frequently injured. During the regular season, he was able to play in parts of just two games. Both of his ankles were severely injured, and he had seen no action since leaving Stanford's 41-3 win over Montana on November 15, missing the monumental clash with archrival California the following week. However, by mid-December Nevers declared himself ready to play on New Year's Day. Stanford fans

debated whether a not-completely-healed Nevers would be an “ace in the hole” or a detriment to the Cardinal. The latter camp had some evidence on its side. Against Utah on November 8, Nevers made some decent gains but had a hard time settling the football and he fumbled several times. If Nevers was able to play at full or nearly full strength, Stanford would have a tremendous advantage.

Another star Cardinal back, it appeared, was definitely out for the big game. Norman Cleaveland, who was also the Stanford punter, had been ruled ineligible for the California game on November 22 after it was determined he had played a few minutes in a game for St. Mary’s College back in 1921. In a gesture of sportsmanship, Rockne wired Stanford president Wilbur to say that he had no objection to Cleaveland playing, as the infraction seemed minor. But the school responded that Pacific Coast Conference rules held that the same eligibility requirements apply to games against non-conference opponents as to those against league teams. Cleaveland would not play.

December 1924 was an exciting time in the Bay Area of California. No other area of the country could boast that both of its major football teams were involved in New Year’s Day clashes with intersectional powers. The Penn-Cal game at Berkeley was big enough that some even suggested moving it to another date so as not to conflict with the Stanford-Notre Dame battle in Pasadena. But it was determined that the move was not practical, and plans for both New Year’s engagements continued.

On December 20, the area received another enormous boost to civic pride when the U.S. government approved plans for a \$21-million bridge to span San Francisco Bay at the area known as the Golden Gate. The wire of approval came from Secretary of War Weeks, whose department was involved due to the strategic location of the proposed span. “The general project for construction of the Golden Gate Bridge is approved, subject to conditions which follow by letter,” the message from Weeks read the possible return of Nevers was not the only factor working to Stanford’s advantage. Pop Warner, it turns out, had assembled a huge body of information on Notre Dame’s formation and tendencies and was using it to prepare his defense.

Former Princeton all-American Franklin B. Morse, writing in a San Francisco paper, put it this way: “Never before did a coach have as much information about a team as has Warner. The intelligence section of the United States expeditionary force during the World war...was a mere amateur compared to Warner’s volunteer informants.” Warner had numerous photos of the Irish, some taken from the sidelines, others from grandstand roofs. All showed action immediately after the snap of the ball, as plays and blocking schemes developed. Warner consulted with coaches of Irish opponents; it was said Coach Roper of Princeton gave detailed description of Notre Dame’s strategy. Some of Warner’s football friends came forward to offer information. The old coach was taking all the information and devising a plan to stop “the horsemen.” He also had some moving pictures of the Notre Dame system to use in his planning.

“Those fellows are a versatile lot,” said Warner. “A fellow has to keep his eye peeled all the time. They have a habit of going where you least expect them. Their regular line plays are as tricky as their aerial attack.” Warner described a typical Notre Dame play in which

the Irish would direct all movement toward one end, and then the runner would quickly cut back through the line. "It's a smart little play, in two movements," he said. "The first, which is designed to fool the opponent as to where the play is going, is comparatively slow, so as to give the enemy plenty of time to get roped in. The second phase comes quicker'n lightnin' ...they've got quite a neat little bundle of this sort of tactics."

On Saturday evening, December 27, the Stanford team of 31 players, three coaches, a trainer and a manager, boarded The Lark at Palo Alto bound for Los Angeles. The early arrival allowed the Cardinal to have several practices at Pasadena. Warner made two important lineup changes by putting Fred Solomon at quarterback and Ed Walker at a halfback spot opposite Cuddeback, the star of the Cal game. Solomon and Walker had entered that game with Cal leading, 20-6, and they helped engineer the comeback that resulted in the crucial 20-20 tie, with Walker throwing several key passes to Cuddeback and Ted Shipkey.

Football Fans were now pouring into Pasadena and environs. Those still wishing to find a ticket descended on the Stanford headquarters in the hopes, against all odds, of finding one. A special train filled with Notre Dame alumni and Knights of Columbus members from the San Francisco area headed south on Monday evening. A special from Chicago carrying Notre Dame alumni and fans, organized by Edward Gould, secretary of the Chicago ND club, rolled into town Tuesday.

One report said the travelers "have plenty of money, given them by Notre Dame enthusiasts back home, to wager on the result." Stanford backers demanded 2-to-1 odds, though the "experts" were making the Irish an 8-to-5 favorite.

Stanford was expected to have the edge in color and student support. There would be a full rooting section including 1,100 Stanford students, equipped with brilliantly-colored cards and organized stunts. During the game, they would spell out "Howdy," form a clover, and show a horseshoe over the letters "ND." A 72-piece Stanford band was preparing to march in the Tournament of Roses parade and to accompany the rooting section at the game.

Notre Dame would need to rely mainly on its support within the general admission audience as well as the attending alumni. Los Angeles attorney Leo "Red" Ward, who four years earlier persuaded young Adam Walsh to make the trip East for college, was busy coordinating many aspects of support for the Irish. A local band was engaged to play at the game, but it had no sheet music for Notre Dame tunes. Ward made several requests to Notre Dame officials for the orchestrations of the Victory March and Hike Song. The Band was unaccustomed to sharing its music beyond campus; the national attention was something new. There were delays in making and sending the arrangements.

The Irish had support from many quarters. Hundreds of alumni of various eastern and Midwest schools purchased blocks of tickets in adjoining sections and planned to cheer for Notre Dame.

Back In South Bend, preparations were underway for another packed house to watch the game on the grid-graph at the Palais Royale. "Direct Wires to the playing field will carry every single detail." Admission was raised to 50 cents, which was "made necessary by the added cost for telegraphic service over so great a distance." The images of Pasadena, even if only in one's mind, would help ward off the chill of a cold snap that dropped the temperature to 18-below earlier in the week.

For millions of fans across the country, the game would enter their homes via radio broadcasting, with four stations providing coverage. A direct wire from the field in Pasadena to the WGN studios in Chicago was to be relayed to WCBS in New York, resulting in "the first time in radio history that Eastern stations have broadcast direct a Pacific coast event." Two California stations, KPO in San Francisco and KHJ in Los Angeles, would also broadcast the game, KPO via a direct wire from the stadium and KHJ from its microphones at the event.

Across the Midwest, telegraph offices in countless towns and cities planned to remain open on the holiday to receive reports from Pasadena. By all accounts, the game would be the most widely followed in the history of football.

Rockne's Reconnaissance on Stanford consisted of reports from two former Irish stars now coaching in the west – Slip Madigan at St. Mary's of California and Bob Matthews at Idaho. Madigan spent some time at Tucson drilling the Irish players on what to expect from the Cardinal.

This would be Rockne's first game going up against Warner as coach. As a Notre Dame player, Rockne twice met Warner-coached teams at Pittsburgh, a scoreless tie in 1911 and a 3-0 Irish win the next year.

A huge crowd greeted the Irish upon their arrival in Los Angeles, including world heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey. Fans strained to get a look at the "four horsemen," the "seven mules" and their teammates. The players were hustled into waiting autos for the ride to their headquarters at the Maryland Hotel. There, another rousing reception awaited the squad, and people jammed the lobby day and night hoping to see any of the lads in person. Chicago's Walter Eckersall, in his dispatches back to Chicago, noted that "never before in the history of football along the Pacific seaboard has so much interest been shown in a pending gridiron struggle." The game would be seen by a capacity crowd of 53,000, and "if the stadium was larger, double that number of tickets could have been sold."

Warner, knowing he had a healthy Nevers and a wealth of information on Notre Dame, set up the game in this way: "Stanford realizes that it is the under dog in this game. But Stanford is not going into the game merely hoping to keep the score down. We hope to win. We'll be trying to do that all afternoon, and the year's record of dope upsetting has been such that no one can say a new surprise will not take place here," Warner said, adding "the boys aren't afraid of Notre Dame."

One Final verse from Arthur Barry in the News-Times set the scene:

The Crowning Glory

“Was there ever such arena,
Since the age of great Athena,
As that field at Pasadena
Where our heroes fight today?
Where the country’s team of Wonder Rends the Stanford hosts asunder, While the cheers
of thousands thunder At the magic of their play?
Far West champions “Synthetic,” Warner’s lads may be frenetic, And their “Pop” be
strategic As he’s never been before;
But they’re up against their masters, And are courting grave disasters From the Irish Line
pilasters,
And from Rockne’s Horsemen Four.
Are we ultra-optimistic?
Is this prophecy sophistic?
Not a bit – ‘tis realistic,
As the season’s records prove: Read tonight’s inspiring story That will tell our crowning
glory, And its terms acclamatory
All your doubting will remove.”

January 1, 1925 began in customary fashion in Pasadena with the annual Tournament of Roses parade, a colorful assemblage of pageantry attracting tens of thousands of viewers to the city’s streets. Throughways were clogged with traffic for hours after the last of the floats finished the route. Despite that, the 53,000 seats of the Rose Bowl stadium in the Arroyo Seco valley were filled by 1:45 p.m., a half hour before the scheduled kickoff. An estimated 10,000 cars were parked nearby. When Jack Dempsey and his date, actress Estelle Taylor, arrived, they caused a stir no different than as if he were arriving for one his prizefights.

In the hills surrounding the valley, thousands more onlookers took their spots alongside the eucalyptus trees. In the distance, the snow-capped San Gabriel mountains stood sentinel over the scene. Down below, the Rose Bowl’s grass field gleamed in the brilliant sunshine. The soft breeze created perfect comfort. It was, said one observer, all the Chamber of Commerce could have hoped for. The center section of seats reserved for the Stanford students was a solid block of red – one of the many colors of cards they would use during the afternoon to form various signs. At 1:45, the Notre Dame team rushed onto the field for its pre-game workout, to the cheers of thousands. The din obliterated the sound of the public address announcer giving the score of the Cal-Penn game up at Berkeley. Great rounds of applause greeted each of Elmer Layden’s punts into the bright blue sky. A few minutes later, Stanford’s men appeared and began limbering up. They were missing one teammate – key substitute back Cliff Hey had suffered an appendicitis attack and was being treated at the team’s hotel. Respected referee Ed Thorp, who had officiated the Army-Notre Dame game, called captains Adam Walsh and Jim Lawson to the center of the field, where Stanford won the toss.

The game began promptly at 2:15. Up until this time, Rockne had been vague about who he planned to start. The answer came when the Shock Troops ran out into kickoff formation. Harry O'Boyle, the son of a coal miner and the first in his family to attend college, was about to kick off in the most-anticipated football game in history. He started in the backfield with Scherer, Hearden and Cerney. Maxwell was at center, flanked by guards Hanousek and Glueckert. Boland and McManmon were the tackles, with Crowe and Eaton at the ends. O'Boyle's kick struck the Stanford goal post, and the Cardinal began at their own 20. On the first play, Cuddeback hit Shipkey with a pass for 7 yards. Nevers carried twice, breaking through for a first down to the 34. A Notre Dame penalty and a run by Cuddeback brought the ball to midfield. Nevers passed to Shipkey for 10 yards, and Nevers ran to the Notre Dame 27. The Cardinal eleven looked poised and confident. They delved into their trick play book for a fake double pass, but Nevers was nailed for a yard loss. Two long passes fell incomplete, and Cuddeback's 40-yard placekick attempt drifted just outside the goal post.

The Shock Troops had held, and now it was time for the regulars. The crowd roared as they saw the "four horsemen" and "seven mules" take the field. On the first play from the Irish 20, Don Miller took the snap and started around left end, as he had so many times during the season. This time, though, he lost control of the ball and Stanford's Johnston recovered on the Irish 17, sending the red-clad rooters into hysteria. Nevers plowed to the 13. The mighty fullback churned for two yards to the 11. With Walsh, Kizer and Weibel on alert, Cuddeback tried to go around end, but failed. On fourth down, Cuddeback made the 20-yard placekick for a 3-0 Cardinal lead.

Notre Dame chose to kick off, and on the runback the Irish were called for roughing, which brought the ball to the Stanford 40. Nevers gained nine yards on three runs, but the Cardinal didn't want to risk losing the ball at midfield, so Cuddeback punted, the ball going over the end line. On second-and-9, Jim Crowley touched the ball for the first time and broke loose around end, tiptoeing along the sideline for a 20-yard gain. Two plays later, Crowley took off one way, reversed field and raced through flailing defenders to the Stanford 29. Don Miller hauled in a quick-strike pass from Stuhldreher and dodged through the defense for another first down. Stanford, staggering from the rapidity of the Irish attack, called a timeout to slow the pace of the game down. But Notre Dame's forces were relentless, as Miller drove behind Joe Bach at left tackle for 10 yards and a first down at the Stanford 9-yard-line. Stuhldreher made four yards behind Walsh to the 5. Then Stanford, with the fired-up Nevers leading an aroused defense, stopped two end runs by Crowley and Miller for minus-5 yards to the nine. Notre Dame, keeping to its season-long pattern of bypassing the field goal route, tried a fourth-down pass.

The Cardinal rush was ferocious, and it forced Stuhldreher to retreat some 20 yards before he lofted a pass that landed incomplete. Stuhldreher lay crumpled on the turf. A delay to attend to the "little general" gave both teams a chance to catch their breath after the frenetic action of the last few minutes. Finally, Stuhldreher rose to his feet, and although he limped badly, he stayed in the game. His Irish mates, agitated over his injury, lined up with resolve as Stanford took possession. On first down, ND broke through to smother Cuddeback for a three-yard loss. Cuddeback, seeking to avoid further retreat,

sliced a punt out of bounds at his own 32. Notre Dame again started fast on offense, as Crowley darted off tackle for 13 yards to the 19. Don Miller rushed for two yards, then Layden carried three times in a row, picking up a first down at the Stanford 7 as a pistol signaled the end of the quarter. During the break, Joe Bach had a head injury taped, which Notre Dame believed to have been caused by a brace worn by Stanford's Lawson. A delay ensued while Rockne spoke with the officials. Referee Thorp came to the Stanford bench and ordered captain Lawson to remove the steel brace he had on his knee.

With ND rooters on their feet, Crowley opened the period by taking the ball four yards to the Stanford 3. The Irish line snapped back into position briskly; Layden received the ball and charged toward the goal. A great mass of toppled bodies – some blue-clad and others red – obscured the line. Referee Thorp plunged into the melee of flailing limbs, located the pigskin and signaled a touchdown. Crowley's kick attempt was blocked, but ND was ahead, 6-3, its fans roaring their approval.

The Irish got the ball back on Cuddeback's kickoff but were held to only a one yard gain on three plays. In punt formation at his 20, Layden set a tremendous drive into the ball and it sailed 70 yards in the air, and upon landing, the ball bounced and rolled over the Stanford goal line. From its 20, the Cardinal started to move. Solomon broke loose for nine yards. Nevers drove the Irish line back another nine. A reverse by Nevers broke past midfield, then a double pass got Lawson free for 17 yards. Everything old "Pop" tried seemed to be working. He was especially fond of plays that kept Cardinal backs wide in the backfield for a pass, then upfield once they had the ball. But the Irish were spotting the pattern, and it matched what Coach Madigan of St. Mary's had told them. On a third-and-five from deep in Irish territory, Nevers faded and attempted a cross-field pass. Elmer Layden anticipated this play and perfectly timed a leap between two Cardinal targets. The ball hit his shoulder and bounced a few feet over his head. But Layden kept his eye on the ball, snared it in his arms and continued running. With his sprinter's speed, Layden dashed into an open field. Within seconds, there was only a Blue-jerseyed horseman accompanying him. Layden waltzed into the end zone to complete a 78-yard play. Frenzied Notre Dame backers jumped and hugged. Crowley made the kick and the Irish led, 13-3.

The Irish again received the kick, but this time had to punt the ball back to Cuddeback, who returned it to midfield. Ample time remained for the Cardinal to score before halftime. Nevers gained two yards on the ground before trying the aerial route. Again the Irish were opportunistic, this time with Joe Bach intercepting the ball at the ND 36. Crowley eluded a horde of red-clad defenders for a long run to Stanford's 34-yard line, but Notre Dame lost the ball on downs. Stanford, starting from its 20, made a series of good gains. A pass from Nevers to Solomon brought the ball to the ND 11 with seconds left in the half. But on the next play, Stanford's Moore fumbled and the Irish pounced on the ball as the half ended, ND leading, 13-3.

Warner's warriors felt they were getting the better of Rockne's men and that it was only a matter of time before they broke through for a touchdown. But they needed to hang onto the football; two interceptions and a fumble in one half was unacceptable.

The Cardinal forced an early break in the second half when they partially blocked a Layden punt three plays into the third quarter. Stanford retreated on a penalty, but Nevers found Ted Shipkey for a 17-yard gain to the Irish 25. On third-and-seven, Shipkey tried a pass but slipped to the turf for a four-yard loss, and another Cuddeback placekick sailed wide. Notre Dame started from its 20, went backward with a penalty and punted to midfield. In an attempt to make a tackle, Layden was knocked unconscious, and the Irish called time. Layden came around and like Stuhldreher, decided to stay in the game. Years of training and sweat to play in a game of this ferocity left Layden no other choice.

From the 50, Nevers passed to Shipkey for 17 yards to the ND 33, and the Cardinal threatened once again. But the Irish dropped Lawson for a three-yard loss around end, a Nevers pass fell incomplete and Nevers was stopped for a short gain. On fourth-and-nine, Cuddeback set up for another placekick; this one fell short and rolled harmlessly over the Irish goal line.

Notre Dame failed to get a first down on its ensuing possession and Layden lined up to punt. He kicked another perfect 50-yarder, directly into Solomon's waiting arms. But the Cardinal quarterback bobbled the ball and it bounded away from him. Solomon dove for the ball but Chuck Collins brushed him aside, and Irish end Ed Hunsinger flew past, picking up the ball and racing 20 yards into the Cardinal end zone amid an escort of blue jerseys. Another huge Stanford miscue had resulted in Notre Dame's 20-3 lead. Back in South Bend, the crowds at the Palais Royale and the Tribune's auditorium were going berserk with the reports. And from coast-to-coast, Notre Dame rooters, Irish-Catholics and football fans in general were thinking this must be Notre Dame's day.

However, Stanford had far too much pride to lie down. The Irish took the following kickoff and again faced a fierce fight from the Cardinal defense. On third-and-five, Nevers picked off a pass by Layden at the ND 29. The muscular blond was never more determined. Nevers gained four yards over tackle, two more at right guard, then plowed for a first down to the 16. He smashed for three more, then another five. A human battering ram, Nevers drove to the Irish six yard line. Then, with the Irish line bunched, he reared back and hit Shipkey with a short pass for a touchdown. Wave after wave of ear-splitting cheers shook the two-year old stadium. Cuddeback's kick sliced Notre Dame's lead to 20-10, and the third quarter ended a minute later.

Warner's crew had ten points to make up in 15 minutes of play. The next few minutes would be critical. Stanford's Baker made the first big play, stepping in front of a Layden pass at the Irish 25. The Cardinal, now playing with the confidence of a champion, drove relentlessly. Nevers made three yards over right tackle, then three more on the left side. On fourth-and-one from the 10, the Cardinal star drove for four yards to the six.

By now the brilliant sun had dropped behind the mountains and the chill of nightfall hung over the stadium. On each play, the throngs roared. A Stanford touchdown here could cut the lead to three points. Nevers had to have the ball. He dragged Irish tacklers for four yards to the 2. Another play gained a yard. Nevers made a half-yard dash – fourth down

inside the 1-yard line. Adam Walsh encouraged his mates as they bunched together on the Irish goal line. They had a pretty good idea of who was headed their way. Nevers took the snap, smacked into the ND wall and fell forward. Harry Stuhldreher ignored the piercing pain in his ankle and drove his 152-pound frame into the pile. The stack of gridders was untangled and revealed the football – less than six inches short of the goal line. Notre Dame ball. Stanford hearts sank.

Layden punted out of danger, then Crowley intercepted a Nevers pass. Layden punted again, this time driving Stanford back to its 28. From there, the Cardinal tried an array of plays, including several more passes. Chuck Collins intercepted a long throw by Nevers at the Notre Dame nine-yard line. With two minutes to play, Layden punted the Irish out of another dangerous situation. Stuhldreher, reeling with pain and utterly exhausted, finally took himself out of the game. A minute later, Layden intercepted a desperate heave by Nevers at the Notre Dame 37 and summoned the energy to outrun a beaten Stanford eleven 63 yards for a clinching touchdown. Crowley's kick made it 27- 10 and Irish fans everywhere knew that the game was over. Almost all of the Shock Troops re-entered the game. The gun sounded and the battle of the ages was history.

Notre Dame had survived the knockout punches of a great opponent, made the most of its opportunities and capped its most memorable season to be truly crowned with glory.