NOTRE DAME, Ind. – Anyone who has watched the Notre Dame basketball team over the last few weeks has likely surmised at least two things: The veteran-laden Irish have not looked like a team that returned all five starters from last year's 22-12 team, and Scott Martin has not looked like himself lately.

How much the latter has to do with the former could become apparent soon.

Irish head coach Mike Brey announced Tuesday night on his weekly radio show that Scott Martin will be shut down indefinitely due to lingering issues with his left knee. Brey shed more light on Martin's status on Wednesday. Brey says Martin's health was "100%" when Big East play began back on Jan. 5 against Seton Hall, but it has since deteriorated.

"The last four we've been kind of piecing it together with duct tape and ibuprofen and not practicing," Brey said of Martin's current condition. "It's just not very productive for him and it's not productive for us. Scott and I talked yesterday (Tuesday) and I thought we need to shut him down to see if he could get back to have one more run for us."

Brey said Martin first felt something wrong with his knee during the Cincinnati game on Jan. 7. The graduate student stood up during a timeout and told his coach that he felt it give. Martin has had both ACL and meniscus surgeries on the knee and there is now likely a large amount of residual scar tissue that is causing the recent problems.

Martin is averaging 7.9 points and 5.9 rebounds through 18 games this season. He is also Notre Dame's top three-point shooter at 46% (31-for-67). His 31 made threes ties Pat Connaughton for the team lead. Martin was scoreless and took just two shots in Monday's loss to Georgetown. He has totaled just seven points over the four-game stretch that has seen the Irish go 1-3. It is not for lack of effort or desire though.

"He didn't want to tell me he couldn't go," Brey said. "In practice the other day he wasn't moving real well and I kind of got on him in front of everybody. I said 'hey you gotta let me know, can you go or not'. Then he kind of cranked-up his motor and took a charge and got a rebound."

"He won the game for us the other night with a charge on one and a half legs coming over to rotate," Brey continued of Martin's gutsy play. "That's not lost on me, but I think there's a little bit of relief of 'I can't do it and I'm not helping us."

There are still seven more weeks left in the regular season. Brey is still not sure of a definite time table for Martin's possible return, but he said three weeks is the likely minimum time the Valparaiso native will be sidelined. Martin's absence will go beyond his scoring at the offensive end and his team defensive presence. There will also be a huge leadership role to fill while he is out.

"Scott was the great endorser of the message a lot of times," Brey said of Martin's leadership. "Not one guy can replace that. There's too much experience there with Scott. We need that a little bit more by committee, but you can't just say 'ok we need to do that'. That needs to be developed over the next couple weeks. I think that's something I've gotta really keep an eye on and keep bringing to the forefront."

Brey expects Martin to still have a presence in the locker room and at practice, but he met recently with Jack Cooley, Eric Atkins, Pat Connaughton, and Jerian Grant to talk to them about the 'committee' approach to leadership his team now needs.

"Two of them are captains, but two of them need to act more like captains now and be more vocal that way," Brey said candidly. "I think a lot falls on Eric and Jack. I think they're very up to

it and I think we just need to identify that ‘you guys need to be more of a voice right now’.”

Just as pressing, if not more so, as the leadership void to fill is the on-court void Martin’s injury creates in the starting lineup. The two most viable options to join the starting five would be Cameron Biedscheid or Garrick Sherman, who are averaging 17.2 and 16.1 minutes, respectively, this season. Sherman has sat the last two games while Tom Knight’s playing time has increased.

“He knew he really wasn’t delivering for us,” Brey said when asked how Sherman has handled the recent demotion. He was his worst critic. We went with Tom Knight and I’ll say this, during games he was great with Tom Knight over there on the bench. He was helping him, but he wants to play and be part of it.”

Sherman, Biedscheid Knight and even Zach Auguste and sparingly used Austin Burgett are both players Brey mentioned as possible candidates to start in the near future. It is all stuff that will be worked out in practice.

“I think I have to have a really open mind to that, and it could be a revolving door,” Brey said of how his starting five could change over the next few games. “If somebody jumps up there and takes that, and that’s how we play with that group, like we played with Martin with those five on our best nights, great.”

Brey added that everybody on the roster will get an equal shot at earning more time and that the first half of Saturday’s game at South Florida is likely to feature a bevy of combinations to see ‘what do we have’?