NOTRE DAME, Ind. – Ever watch a kitten paw at a sock toy? Hold the toy out, kitten paws at it, sock bounces away, but it keeps coming back. That's what most of the first half of Notre Dame's 84-57 win over Brown looked like on Saturday night at Purcell Pavilion at the Joyce Center.

The Irish were comfortable for most of the half against the overmatched Bears, but the Ivy League foes kept finding a way to bounce right back in Notre Dame's face to make it a game at least until the teams went to the locker room.

"I like how we're shooting the ball," Irish head coach Mike Brey said after the victory. "Early in the season we labored making open shots. I think we're feeling better about our shot and that's a big key."

In the end Cam Biedscheid came off the bench to lead five Irish players in double figures with a career-high 17 points. It is his second consecutive double-digit game and his third in his last four games.

"I'm just really getting a lot of help from the veteran guys," Biedscheid explained of his recent success. "They just really talk to me a lot out there on the floor and just really help keep me focused. I've just been stepping-up and knocking the shots down."

The freshman, who entered the night averaging 8.0 points, has totaled 49 points over the four-game stretch. His previous high was 13 points two weeks ago against St. Francis. A new round of the flu is going around the team, including Biedscheid.

“My stomach was real upset and my head was hurting,” the freshman said of his condition earlier in the week. “I really didn’t have any energy. I was in bed for a couple days (and) missing practices.”

“I’m thrilled with what he’s giving us,” Brey said of Biedscheid, who was 7-for-10 from the field on the night. “I thought it was great tonight, because the first time in there maybe wasn’t as good a segment, but he didn’t let it bother him. He came in there and gave us a heck of a stretch.”

The Irish (8-1) connected on four of their first six shots in the game’s first three and a half minutes. Jack Cooley rolled a pair of shots in from close range, while Pat Connaughton hit from 3-point distance for an early 9-2 lead.

It took Brown (3-5) until the 14:30 mark in the half to hit its second field goal, but the Bears got rolling after that. Three Brown players made shots over the next four minutes, including a three from Tucker Halpern, to draw within 15-12 at the 10:20 media timeout.

Sean Sullivan capped a 6-0 run for the Bears to tie the score at 15-15 with an old fashioned three-point play when he was fouled by Cam Biedscheid. The Irish cranked-up their intensity after that to explode for a 10-0 run of their own. Eric Atkins and Scott Martin each nailed threes in the stretch to give ND a 25-15 advantage.

Garrick Sherman, who is averaging 10.1 points a game, did not play against the Bears with what Brey said is a bruised knee suffered earlier in the week. With Sherman out, both Tom Knight and Zach Auguste saw more floor time than usual.

“I’m thrilled with the lift Tom Knight gave us,” Brey said of his senior. “It’s interesting how it makes me think a little differently here as we move forward. That may be our seventh guy (in

the playing rotation).”

Brey’s “seventh guy” comment is interesting, because Sherman and Biedscheid have been the top two players off the bench this season, averaging 18.6 and 17.3 minutes, respectively, while Knight has averaged just 3.3 minutes. Brey said that Sherman will be ok to play next week against Purdue.

Brey said earlier in the week that he was looking for a possible eighth player in the rotation and when asked to clarify his comment about Knight was his seventh or eighth player Brey replied simply “seven”.

The Fighting Irish had a pair of 10-0 runs and a 12-0 run in the game. Cooley finished with 15 points and 12 rebounds, Martin scored 14, Grant had 12, and Atkins added a double-double with 10 points and 12 rebounds.

“Our guys are gonna get shots, because they pass well,” Brey said of his team’s spurtability. “We’re gonna find open guys. We weren’t making as many of them the first two (or) three weeks.”

Atkins played the first 38 minutes of the game before finally getting his first rest of the night. He was the only Irish player to see such extensive action.

“He can play long minutes,” Brey said of his junior point guard. “He’s in great shape. I just like having him out there and I like it flowing with him. He just did a great job orchestrating.”

The double-double is the third of Atkins’ career. All have come this season. He had no turnovers in the game and has tallied 33 assists and just two turnovers in Notre Dame’s last four games.

Biedscheid and Brown’s Matt Sullivan, a Wilmette, Ill native, locked in their own personal scoring duel midway through the second half. Biedscheid scored nine straight points for the Irish

over a 5:30 stretch, while Sullivan scored seven straight for the Bears in less than two minutes. Both players hit 3-pointers, while Biedscheid had a highlight dunk in the middle of his run.

The Fighting Irish saw their first 20-point lead of the night when Jack Cooley made 1-of-2 free throws with 7:52 remaining to make it 65-45. The shots were just ND's fourth and fifth attempts of the night. Three-pointers by Jerian Grant and Martin put the finishing touches on a 12-0 Irish run for a 71-45 lead as the Irish coasted to the finish line for their eighth win of the season.

The Irish shot 34-for-68 from the field, including 9-for-26 (35%) from 3-point land. They committed just three turnovers with 22 assists on their 34 field goals.

Notre Dame is off this week for finals before getting back on the court a week from Saturday in the Crossroads Classic in Indianapolis against Purdue – Martin's first collegiate team.

"It is going to be a great atmosphere down there," Martin said of the event, which will also feature Butler against Indiana. "It is always great to get all four Indiana teams playing down there. It is really Indiana basketball at its finest. It has been a long time since I played for them. I am here (and) I play for Notre Dame and I am really excited to get out there and try to get a win."