

## Recruiting Far And Wide

Written by Brian Smith  
Thursday, 27 December 2012 21:06

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Recruiting continues to move a torrid pace. Come inside and see what Notre Dame recruiting is all about.

The dead period will soon be over. The 2013 Notre Dame recruiting class will be coming together, but expect more than a few new names to emerge. Additionally, key recruits recently committed that many thought would not, and 2014 recruiting already heated up.

### New Names

As most recruiting fans understand, there will be new names that continue to ooze out into the public domain in the near future. It's inevitable. Allow me to throw a monkey wrench into the equation, albeit a good monkey wrench. Due to Notre Dame winning big this year, the list of names could grow longer than usual. Trust me, Notre Dame continues to survey the options, and sometimes those options call Notre Dame first. Bottom line, the Irish sit in an envious position.

From an extra special point of view, I would just love for Notre Dame to steal a recruit from a school like Southern California (in addition to a certain safety, see below), Texas, Louisiana State, Florida State, or Michigan. May the chips fall where they may.

### Big Finish

The more I evaluate the current number of commitments and the so-called remaining number of scholarships Notre Dame will be able to extend to recruits, the more I realize that at some point Notre Dame head coach **Brian Kelly** might be forced to make a really hard decision. Does he bring back a solid player for a fifth-year or does he bring in new blood from the recruiting ranks? I'm not going to project my feelings about which player(s) should be turned down in an effort to gain another elite recruit such as **Eddie Vanderdoes** (probably a tough sell, but you never know), and I certainly would not want to be coach Kelly having to tell a young man he cannot come back. Then again, I don't earn a seven-figure salary either.

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Coach Kelly's decision will ultimately impact the recruiting class and the roster. Therefore, his decision will be vital. Further, how coach Kelly handles the recruitments of each of prospects expected to commit to Notre Dame before Vanderdoes even visits Notre Dame will be paramount as well. The more recruiting momentum Notre Dame earns, the more likely a player such as Vanderdoes will want to join the Notre Dame Football program.

Assuming Notre Dame lands **Tarean Folston** and **Max Redfield**, as expected, adding one or possibly two more big-time recruits could bring Notre Dame the mythical recruiting national title. Maybe such rankings will be hyperbole, but if one gauges the success of teams that consistently finished within the top five to ten spots for any of the recruiting services during the past five to seven years, and one will primarily read the list like one would read the top 15 rankings of the final BCS polls.

In my opinion, Notre Dame will finish this recruiting campaign strong, and this recruiting class will be the backbone of at least a couple more BCS bowl game runs, if not BCS National Championship Game runs. Recruiting matters. No doubt about it.

### Prime Recruits

Perhaps the biggest names to announce for Notre Dame recently would be **Louis Nix** and **Zac k Martin**

. Nix helped keep linemen away from Irish linebackers all season long because one blocker rarely contains him. Martin helped protect the blind side of

**Everett Golson**

and

**Tommy Rees**

. With both players returning for the 2013 season, it should elevate Notre Dame's preseason ranking to inside the top 10, if not the top five.

### 2014

Most people spend their Christmas break with family and friends. I do as well, but with a caveat. I watch underclassmen recruiting film. I've done it for at least a decade. I just love it. From what I learned, so do several Irish coaches, or, well, at least they did leading up to the Xmas break.

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In short, Notre Dame will be moving in for the kill with 2013 and 2014 recruits come this January.

I expect at least one or two 2014 recruits to pop for the Irish by mid-February at the latest. Recruiting changed, and Notre Dame now knows how to stay up with the Joneses. It's a great feeling as an Irish fan to know the coaching staff continues to be relentless along the recruiting trail. The following 2014 recruits, in my opinion, could pull the trigger early for Notre Dame:

**Braden Smith**, OT, 6-6, 275, Olathe, KS (South) – Smith cancelled a trip to South Bend earlier this year, but he's intrigued with the Irish. Alabama and Oklahoma, two schools he visited already, along with a host of other programs will continue to pursue the very athletic left tackle prospect. My gut tells me that because A) Notre Dame really needs offensive linemen within the 2014 recruiting class, B) Notre Dame holds mojo within the recruiting world because of the 2012 season, C) Smith already holding Notre Dame in high regard, and D) Smith's eventual visit to South Bend taking place after he visited several other prominent suitors, leaves the Irish with a tactical advantage. Bottom line, need to get Smith on the Notre Dame campus during spring football if not earlier. If the Irish do that, I believe he commits no later than May. He's just a good fit on and off the gridiron for Notre Dame, not to mention he's a potential five star recruit and Notre Dame began recruiting Smith long ago.

**Brandon Dawkins**, QB, 6-3, 205, Westlake, CA (Oaks Christian) – From the same high school as **Jimmy Clausen**, Dawkins visited Notre Dame already. He's planning to visit Notre Dame once again. Further, quarterbacks generally commit early to preserve their spot. Dawkins could be a very early 2014 commitment for the Irish.

**Andrew Trumbetti**, DE, 6-5, 250, Demarest, NJ – A life-long Notre Dame fan, hard to imagine this young man's recruitment not ending by May. He's been in communication with Notre Dame for quite some time. Combining Trumbetti with 2014 DE commitment **Jay**

**Hayes**

from Brooklyn, NY (Poly Prep) would be a great start to the defensive line recruiting haul. It's just a matter of time.

**Enoch Smith**, DL, 6-3, 270, Chicago, IL (Mt. Carmel) – A player that's been to Notre Dame already, Smith earned an early offer from Notre Dame and the Irish appear to be the team to beat. Overall, it appears to be a pretty good year for the greater Chicago area. Therefore, whether it will be Smith or another touted prep prospect from the land of Lincoln, do not be

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surprised if the Irish secure at least one early commitment from an Illinois recruit.

**Andrew Williams**, OLB/DE, 6-4, 250, McDonough, GA (Eagle's Landing Christian) – The teammate of current 2013 Notre Dame commitment **Isaac Rochell**, Williams visited Notre Dame once already and will do so again when Rochell takes his official visit to South Bend in January. Could Williams be the fifth 2014 recruit to pull the trigger for the Irish?