

## Finalizing A Top Recruiting Class

Written by Brian Smith

Wednesday, 30 January 2013 11:04

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With one week remaining from national signing day, I offer my thoughts about which prospects will sign with the Irish. Additionally, I rate this Notre Dame class as it stands today.

**Deon Hollins** – There's been more back-and-forth conjecture about this young man than just about any other prospect left on Notre Dame or any other program's recruiting board. UCLA? Notre Dame? Perhaps he's privately switched back and forth and the public does not even know it. In fact, that's what I believe happened with Hollins (and happens with many 17-year olds) and could happen again.

**My Prediction** – Notre Dame lands the speed rusher. With that in mind, UCLA and Notre Dame will battle to the very last moment regardless of which program Hollins considers himself a commitment to today or will consider himself a commitment to tomorrow, et cetera.

Here's Hollins' Twitter account address if anyone would like some insight into his recruitment:  
[https://twitter.com/hollins\\_deon](https://twitter.com/hollins_deon)

**Terrodney Prevot** – As the USC ship sinks further, there out-of-state options dwindle further. It would be one thing for the Trojans to keep most of the California talent, but it looks as if Prevot will sign with Texas A&M, or, perhaps Notre Dame if he makes his official visit. Much like Hollins, Prevot's recruitment can be quite difficult to follow. Then again, perhaps

**Lane Kiffin**

pulls one out of the hat?

My guess is Prevot will visit Notre Dame because he's intrigued, but with his earlier comments about how well he fits in at USC it's hard for me to imagine he will like Notre Dame better.

**My Prediction** – Prevot will split the difference between USC and Notre Dame and select Texas A&M.

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**Tarean Folston** – Irish fans should not discount Auburn. The Tigers hired former Florida State assistant coach **Dameyune Craig**, and he holds a strong relationship with Folston. As many people know, 17-year olds often make college decisions based on relationships, not academic rankings via **US**

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, much to Notre Dame fans' chagrin. I met Folston, and his father, while in Florida. Great kid, no doubt, and his dad proved to be classy, too. What they will base the final decision upon, however, I do not know. Folston always kept his thoughts close to the vest, and I doubt that changes between now and signing day.

**My Prediction** – Folston selects Notre Dame. I made this prediction based on Folston's relationship with Irish assistant coach **Tony Alford** in combination with the chance to play early because Notre Dame needs running backs that can also play in the slot. I still believe this is a very close race.

**Ty Isaac** – I will cut to the chase, Isaac will not don the Blue & Gold.

**My Prediction** – USC.

**Eddie Vanderdoes** – Really hard to gauge what will happen with the California standout because he's not completing any interviews. I will state that UCLA holds the family edge. He's from California, there's a specific family connection to UCLA, and of course the weather is much better in Westwood. From all I heard, USC is no longer a real contender.

**My Prediction** – I believe Notre Dame finishes second. UCLA wins out.

**Kyle Fitts** – Much like Vanderdoes, the local schools hold a big edge. If Fitts was going to pick Notre Dame, I believed he needed to be blown away on his visit and commit shortly thereafter. He did not.

**My Prediction** – UCLA.

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**Final Thoughts** – Many fans will remember the negative of not landing more big fish at the end of the recruiting cycle because that's what fans do. Do not be one of those fans. Overall, this is a great recruiting class. I just do not believe Notre Dame will finish as strong as it would like due in large part to the usual suspects: distance from home and weather.

I believe even if Notre Dame does not add another prospect that it's definitive a top five class. Better yet, it's a balanced class with talented prospects on both the offensive and defensive lines, and it adds quickness, speed, and size across the board. It's a great haul.

This class holds up versus Alabama, Louisiana State, Texas A&M, South Carolina Florida, Florida State, and Georgia within a specific area that I believe Notre Dame lacked prior to this recruiting class. Depth along the offensive and defensive lines in conjunction with bringing in at least one stud on each side that can be a first round draft pick.

That's really what it comes down to. Did Notre Dame close the gap, especially along the lines, with the SEC powers and Florida State? I say yes, and resoundingly so. Imagine The Aggies without their two outstanding offensive tackles this year. Imagine Florida State without its ridiculous defensive end talent and depth this year. Notre Dame needs to be on the same level at those positions in terms of talent and depth.

Obviously if I am correct and Notre Dame misses with Fitts and Vanderdoes it will be a blow, but it's still a really good group in terms of quality. The offensive line haul is more powerful than any in recent memory. I believe that at least three of the five will be multi-year starters. Also I believe that **Isaac Rochell** will be a star at defensive end, a critical position for any team.

Landing **Max Redfield** means signing a player that will reach the sideline and break up many of the passes that Alabama just murdered Notre Dame with in the National Title Game. I could go on and on. Notre Dame increased it's athleticism at the skill positions. One final point to conclude about the Irish class.

It can be really hard to land a really good running back, let alone two, in one recruiting class. I believe that the combination of **Greg Bryant** and **Tarean Folston** will prove to be one of the better running back tandems in Notre Dame history.