

Recruiting Week In Review

Written by Joe Bradshaw

Monday, 26 November 2012 09:19



It should be a wild recruiting ride for Notre Dame between now and National Signing Day in 2013. However, perhaps the biggest dividends for this season's perfect record and berth in the National Championship game will be paid in the recruiting class of 2014. Already 2014 recruits are lining up to get a better look at Notre Dame and the Irish coaching staff hopes to be able to cash in big. The offensive line slots in the class of 2013 filled up very quickly and the Irish hope to achieve the same success in the 2014 class. Last week Irish Sports Daily spoke to two 2014 recruits that are very high on Notre Dame. What have you been missing by not being a member of Irish Sports Daily?

[Jimmy Byrne](#) , OL, 6-4, 285, St. Ignatius High School, Cleveland, OH is nearing a college decision and has narrowed his list of potential schools to only two, Notre Dame and Ohio State. Though Byrne is also considering other schools such as Illinois, West Virginia and Michigan State, the Irish and the Buckeyes still stand out as his top two.

"It could change if some other schools jumped in, but right now that hasn't really happened," stated Byrne. "Ohio State and Notre Dame are definitely my top two right now, no order."

Byrne did manage to make it to South Bend for the Michigan game, despite the fact that St. Ignatius did not have a single bye week this season and only one Friday game. Their ouster from the playoffs freed up another Saturday for Byrne who took advantage of that to visit Ohio State last weekend for the Michigan game. Irish Sports Daily's Christian McCollum interviewed Byrne prior to his Ohio State visit.

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“I think it’ll be cool to see the atmosphere for the Michigan game,” the talented Ohio athlete stated. “I’m kind of looking forward to that. I want to see their offensive line.”

Speaking of offensive lines, Byrne has been very impressed with Notre Dame’s this season. He has also been impressed with Notre Dame’s rise to the top of the polls this year.

“That’s pretty crazy,” he said. “From being a mediocre team the last couple of years to being number one is pretty impressive.”

Byrne has begun developing a strong relationship with Notre Dame offensive line coach Harry Hiestand.

“I’ve been talking to Coach Hiestand pretty much every other week,” Byrne informed. “We’re just talking football, pretty basic stuff right now. I’m at that point now where I’m going to start narrowing things down and really figuring out the ins and outs. I’ll probably make a decision the next couple months.”

For Byrne, making an early decision is very important. He wants the luxury of focusing on his senior season without the distractions that come with recruiting.

“I just want to get it out of the way and focus on improving my game and not having to worry about all the college stuff,” he explained. “I just want to get ready for next year and put all of the other stuff to the side.”

The most important thing for Byrne in his recruitment is his relationship with the coaching staffs.

“I think the coaching staff is probably going to be the biggest thing, particularly the offensive line coach,” he said. “Those are the guys I’m going to be spending time with the most for four or five

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years. I just want to make sure I'm in the best position to succeed."

Notre Dame recently received a visit from yet another 2014 offensive line recruit. [Mason Cole](#), OL, 6-5, 275, East Lake High School, Tarpon Springs, FL visited South Bend for the Wake Forest game. This was Cole's second time on the Notre Dame campus and his experiences continue to get better.

"The game was really awesome and Notre Dame took care of business," Cole related. "The fans there are crazy and it was a really amazing atmosphere. After the game, I got to sing the alma mater on the field with the team and that was just cool."

Cole continued.

"It gets better and better each time I go up there for a visit. I get to know a little bit more about the traditions at Notre Dame. Even though Wake Forest wasn't that good of a team, the atmosphere was just crazy and I couldn't imagine what it would be like during a big rivalry game like Michigan or USC."

During his time on campus, Cole hoped to meet with the coaching staff and begin to develop a relationship with them. He also wanted to know where he stood in Notre Dame's plans.

"I was able to talk to Coach (Brian) Kelly, Coach Hiestand and Coach (Tony) Alford who recruits my area," he related. "They were just telling me how much they want me there at Notre Dame and think I would be a great fit to the program. I will tell you this; Coach Alford is very honest and up front with me about the whole recruiting thing and that's what I really appreciate about him."

Cole's visit was amazing for him. In fact, it was so amazing that he considered ending the recruiting process that weekend.

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“It did come across my mind a little bit, but I still want to wait a little bit longer because there are a couple of schools I haven’t seen yet,” he admitted. “I could commit any time soon, but right now it’s just the fact that I want to see these other schools first. Notre Dame is definitely at the top of my list along with a couple of other schools, but I have no doubt they will definitely be one of my top choices when it comes time for me to choose.”

These two summaries represent just a sample of the Notre Dame football recruiting information available each week on Irish Sports Daily.