

## Byrne Gets Even Closer

Written by Christian McCollum  
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It's always been important for [Jimmy Byrne](#) to get his college decision made early and the 2014 Cleveland offensive lineman seems to be getting closer and closer to making one.

The 6-foot-4, 285-pounder from St. Ignatius High School has had a top two of Notre Dame and Ohio State for some time now and Irish offensive line coach Harry Hiestand visited the school on Monday.

"Jimmy is getting very close to making a decision," St. Ignatius head coach Chuck Kyle told Irish Sports Daily.

"He hasn't done it yet, no matter what rumors may start out there, he hasn't made it yet. He's going to think it over in the next few days. It seems like he's kind of getting to that point, but we'll see."

Byrne has been high on the Irish since they offered during an unofficial visit this summer. The junior lineman was struck by everything about Notre Dame, but Hiestand might have made the biggest impression.

"Coach Hiestand is a wealth of knowledge," said Kyle. "He's coached offensive line a lot of

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places and big time. My impression is that Jim is impressed with that.”

Given the value Byrne’s placing on who his future position coach will be in his decision, the Irish have been among the favorites to land Byrne ever since.

Notre Dame already has commitments from wide receiver Justin Brent, linebacker Greer Martini and defensive lineman Jay Hayes in the Class of 2014 and a pledge from Byrne would serve as a huge building block along the offensive line.

Playing for one of the country’s top programs, Byrne stood out.

“I think people have seen Jim just keep improving,” said Kyle. “A lot of people last year saw a lot of potential, but he was only a sophomore. I think a lot of people have seen his progress as far as technique and confidence and Jimmy is a really hard worker.

“He loves to try to improve and is open to coaching. I think that attracts people. He knows he needs to keep working, but is open to improvement. That’s great.”

The next step is to cement himself as a team leader, but that process began this past season.

“Being a junior, obviously an underclassman is conscious of a senior’s leadership and cooperating totally,” he said. “But I do have to say, Jim sensed that he was the key guy on the offensive line and he accepted that. I think that’s the kind of leadership you’re talking about right now. Next year he’s going to be a senior and I think that he’ll take another step.

“But in crunch time, there’s a certain lineman you always know you have to run behind and that’s what Jimmy has accepted.”