Jimmy Byrne returned to Notre Dame on Saturday for the first time since the 2014 Cleveland offensive lineman offered his pledge to the Irish last month.

“It was a great visit,” the 6-foot-4, 285-pounder from St. Ignatius High School said. “I got to talk with a lot of the coaches. I got another little tour and it was a good day.

“It was nice coming in committed. The first time there was kind of exploratory, getting to know some things. The second time around, you know where you’re going and you know who you’re dealing with. It’s nice. It’s a lot easier just to go there and enjoy the time.”

Irish offensive line coach Harry Hiestand played a major role in securing Byrne’s commitment and on Saturday, Byrne was able to begin forming strong bonds with head coach Brian Kelly and offensive coordinator Chuck Martin.

“I really got to spend a lot of the time with the coaches I didn’t get to spend a lot of time with previously,” said Byrne. “I talked with Coach Martin for almost an hour. I talked again with Coach Hiestand. I met with Coach Kelly for the first time with my family, so that was really good.”

Meeting with Kelly was something Byrne was looking forward to coming into the trip.

“He kind of gave me and my family his background coming from Grand Valley State, Central Michigan and Cincinnati,” the 2014 offensive lineman said of Kelly. “He gave us his plan for the future. He’s going to continue to work to build this program into a national championship caliber team. He feels there’s a lot of work still to do, but they’re close to getting there. That’s really encouraging to hear.

“He just seems like a good guy. He’s a guy who’s really passionate about his job. He cares about his players and wants what’s best for them both on and off the field.”

Byrne also enjoyed his meeting with Martin.

“He’s cool,” said Byrne. “I talked to him for about an hour. I learned a lot of different things about him, his responsibilities on the team and stuff like that. It was good to talk to him.”

As always, Byrne had a good time with Hiestand.

“We went over a little bit of film, looking at some technique stuff to work on,” Byrne said. “We watched Zack Martin, who I think Coach Hiestand feels is one of the best offensive linemen he’s got. It was good to learn from him and watch Zack Martin and see what he’s capable of.

“He talked about me getting back up for spring practice and getting the chance to spend the night and spend some time with the other linemen. In a year and a half, they’re going to be my teammates, so the quicker I can start to get to know those guys, the better.”

Byrne is planning to get back soon.

“I’m not sure exactly when,” he said. “I’ve got a little bit of time to figure that out, but I’d definitely like to get back up there. Maybe I’ll spend the night, see practice one day and practice the next and spend some time with the coaches and players again.”

Byrne didn’t get the chance to spend much time with any of the other recruits. He’d hoped to get a chance to talk with Maryland offensive lineman Sam Mustipher, but plans on reaching out very soon.

“We were moving around so much and when we were together, we were being spoken to by different people,” said Byrne. “I know some of those guys got offers, so I’ll definitely be trying to get a hold of them and talking them into Notre Dame.”

Overall, the visit served as reassurance for Byrne that he made the right decision.

“Definitely,” he said. “Part of the ‘Junior Day’ was coaches talking to some of the guys who aren’t committed about the benefits of Notre Dame. It was good to hear all of that stuff again. It was good to meet with some of the coaches. It was just reassuring talking to everyone.”

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