

Recruiting Week In Review

Written by Joe Bradshaw
Monday, 21 January 2013 08:59



The last couple of weeks have been tumultuous ones at Notre Dame but that hasn't stopped the coaching staff from continuing to push ahead with recruiting. While there's still considerable work to be done with the class of 2013, the coaching staff is also working very hard on the class of 2014. And like all Notre Dame recruiting classes, the staff is searching far and wide for the talent they need to continue their rise to the top of college football. Last week Irish Sports Daily spoke to two recruits, one in the class of 2013 and one in the class of 2014 that Notre Dame is recruiting heavily. What have you been missing by not being a member of Irish Sports Daily?

[Sam Mustipher](#) , OL, 6-4, 290, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School, Olney, MD took an unofficial visit to Notre Dame last week looking for two things, a scholarship offer and a better feel for Notre Dame. When he left, he had both.

"I was meeting with the offensive line coach and they said I had to go meet with Coach (Brian) Kelly for a little bit," Mustipher recalled. "I went into his office and sat down on the couch with my dad. He said 'I wanted to personally let you know that you have \$63,000 a year to go to the University of Notre Dame.'" He asked me if I was excited about that and I said 'yeah, that's pretty awesome.'"

In addition to Notre Dame, Mustipher currently holds scholarship offers from Florida, Ohio State, Michigan, Penn State, North Carolina, North Carolina State and Maryland, among many others.

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The Maryland standout not only came away from his unofficial visit with the coveted scholarship offer but also with a much greater appreciation for Notre Dame.

“It was great,” said Mustipher of his visit. “Honestly, the visit went above and beyond my expectations, but then getting to meet with Coach Kelly, sitting in his office, seeing all the rings he has from previous schools and championships, seeing it and getting a feel for the direction of this program was pretty awesome. He’s definitely a down to earth guy. He spoke with me just like he would speak with any other player. It was nice.”

Mustipher was impressed with the Notre Dame tradition.

“You talk about the tradition with a lot of guys and people see Notre Dame Fighting Irish and say ‘that’s a traditional program,’” he said. “But for me I didn’t really understand what that encompassed. You go to the stadium and you see they still have wooden bleachers. They don’t have any advertisements within the stadium. It’s all about what you do as far as athletic ability on the football field.”

Mustipher got a chance to meet some of the current Notre Dame players, sharing a dinner with them.

“I spoke with Zach Martin, the left tackle,” he said. “He’s a pretty cool guy. He told me the next time I come up to let him know.”

Mustipher also got to spend time with Notre Dame Offensive Line Coach Harry Hiestand. He liked what Hiestand had to say, right down to his expected position. While most programs are projecting him as a tackle, the Notre Dame offensive line coach had a different idea.

“He’s a cool guy,” he said. “He’s calm but he told me he’s going to get in me if I do decide to come up there. On the field he’s going to push me to the best of my ability and that’s something I’m O.K. with. We spoke about what position I’d be playing. He likes me more as an inside guy. He felt I’d be playing a guard spot with my athletic ability and ability to pull and speed and leverage I have coming off the ball.”

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Mustipher is already planning to return to South Bend and this time he's planning on bringing his mother and younger brother.

"I might come up for a spring practice," he said. "This time I only came up with my dad. I want to make sure I bring my mother and little brother back up with me. If I'm not committed before the time of the official visits, I'll definitely be back there for an official."

While Mustipher isn't ready to set a list of favorites, let alone name a leader, it's clear that Notre Dame made a strong impression.

"No favorites as of right now, but with this visit, they're definitely going to be high on my list," he stated. "This was a great visit for me. Bar none, this is one of the best I've had. I'm just looking to build on this throughout the process."

[Juwaan Williams](#), ATH, 6-1, 180, Tucker High School, Tucker, GA not only has a list of favorites but has narrowed that list to three schools and Notre Dame is one of them. The 2013 standout plans to make a decision on January 28th.

"I'm down to three right now, Vanderbilt, Oregon and Notre Dame," he stated.

Clemson and Florida State had been on Williams' list of five but he cut them.

"I really didn't feel too right about Clemson," he said. "At Florida State, my recruiting coach Coach Dameyune Craig took a job at Auburn and I haven't heard anything from them since his departure."

And though Oregon Coach Chip Kelly left for the NFL and the Philadelphia Eagles, Williams has kept them on his list, at least as long as the staff remains mostly intact.

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Narrowing his list has helped Williams clarify his situation but has done little to make the process easier.

“It makes my job a little harder and it puts a little extra on me because it’s a three way tie among the three schools right now,” he explained. “You get everyone’s opinion on all three schools. You hear it every day, whether it’s from your peers, people on social media or blog sites. It just gives you more pros and cons to each school.”

Williams sees the strengths of each of his finalists.

“Vandy is SEC football, you can’t beat it,” he said. “It’s a great education. When you have the Vanderbilt education on your resume, you’re likely to get your foot in the door at any job you want.”

“Notre Dame is the same way. They didn’t finish the season the way they wanted, but they were fighting the whole year to get to the national championship and they made it there. They just couldn’t stop a good Alabama team at the time.”

“For Oregon, everyone talks about their contract with Nike and how they get all of the new Nike stuff every year, but for me, it’s the school’s education. My degree, if I go there, would probably be the hardest route to take just because that’s one of their best majors there. That was one of the good things I got from my visit there.”

Williams plans to major in either physical therapy or pre-med.

Williams took his final official visit, to Vanderbilt last weekend and now must sort through the schools to make his final decision. He’ll rely heavily on his parents in making that choice.

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“I’ll talk with mom about the education part and dad about the football part and take them both into consideration and make the best decision possible for me and my future.”

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