

## 2014 Offensive/Defensive Line Preview

Written by ISD Staff  
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With the 2013 recruiting class in the books, Notre Dame can turn its full attention the Class of 2014 and so can Irish Sports Daily.

Today, we're breaking down the 2014 class by position and looking at the prospects Notre Dame figures to recruit the hardest. Here's a list of players Notre Dame has identified early as top targets and who have also expressed an interest in the Irish.

Click on each prospect's name to view their full profile.

### OFFENSIVE LINE

**Target Number: 3-4**

[Jimmy Byrne](#) (Cleveland, Ohio/St. Ignatius): The Irish got off to a great start with their offensive line recruiting in 2014 when they landed a commitment from the 6-foot-4, 285-pounder

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in early December. Byrne had early offers from Ohio State, Michigan State and West Virginia among others. Notre Dame got the edge over the Buckeyes in the end, partially because of the relationship Byrne formed with Irish offensive line coach Harry Hiestand. Notre Dame probably isn't going to be taking five offensive linemen in 2014 like it did in 2013, so accepting an early commitment shows how the Irish feel about Byrne.

**Sam Mustipher (Olney, Md./Good Counsel):** The 6-foot-4, 290-pounder went to Notre Dame for an unofficial visit last month hoping that the Irish would offer. They did and now they sit in a great position with Mustipher, who also holds offers from Ohio State, Michigan, Florida, Clemson, Pittsburgh and West Virginia among several others. Mustipher was blown away by his trip to South Bend and is already planning a return visit for a spring practice.

**Braden Smith (Olathe, Kan./Olathe South):** Smith is an elite prospect with an outstanding early offer sheet. The 6-foot-6, 280-pound specimen already has offers from Notre Dame, Michigan, Ohio State, Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma, Texas, Texas A&M, Stanford and South Carolina among others. He keeps a low profile, but saw the Irish play against Oklahoma last season and is already making plans to take a visit to Notre Dame at some point in the coming months.

**Casey Tucker (Chandler, Ariz./Hamilton):** The teammate of 2013 Irish cornerback signee Cole Luke made an early pledge to USC, but that isn't going to stop Notre Dame from continuing to recruit the 6-foot-5, 270-pounder. He grew up a big Notre Dame fan and there was a point last summer when Hamilton head coach Steve Belles thought Tucker might be his first player to follow his footsteps to Notre Dame before Luke beat him to it. Tucker's current offer sheet includes USC, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Michigan and Washington among others.

**[Orlando Brown Jr.](#) (Duluth, Ga./Peachtree Ridge):** The son of the former NFL offensive lineman by the same name is one of the nation's top offensive line prospects for 2014. The mammoth 6-foot-8, 345-pounder has an offer sheet that could rival anyone's in the nation and includes Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, Georgia, Iowa, Miami, Michigan, Ole Miss, North Carolina, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, USC and Wisconsin among dozens of others. He has an early leaderboard of Michigan, South Carolina, Ohio State, Florida, Georgia, Oregon, Alabama and Iowa, but hasn't ruled out the Irish or anybody else yet.

**[Mason Cole](#) (Tarpon Springs, Fla./East Lake):** Like his teammate, wide receiver Artavis Scott, Cole is quickly becoming one of the most sought-after prospects in the 2014 class. The 6-foot-5, 275-pound trench warrior is filling up the offer sheet, which includes Notre Dame, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, Michigan, Ohio State, South Carolina, Stanford and USC already. The Florida product has already visited Notre Dame a couple of times and has stated quite frequently how much he really likes the Irish. Notre Dame and Michigan appear to be among Cole's favorites at this point.

**[Watch Cole's highlights here](#)**

**[K.C. McDermott](#) (Wellington, Fla./Palm Beach Central)** Notre Dame targeted McDermott early on in the process and it's easy to see why. The 6-foot-6, 290-pound Florida product is absolutely dominant on the football field in both run and pass blocking. When watching his highlight tape, you almost cringe every time he gets his hands on his opponent and drives them into the ground. The talented lineman has an impressive offer sheet. Teams like Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Miami, Michigan, Michigan State, North Carolina, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma and Wisconsin are just a few that have thrown their hats in the ring. McDermott is in constant contact with Notre Dame and made a trip to South Bend last summer. The 2014 prospect loved his visit and claimed an early top three of Miami, Alabama and Notre Dame. His father says he'll probably be making a decision before next football season and rumor has it it will come down to the Hurricanes and Irish.

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**[Jamarco Jones](#) (Chicago, Ill./De La Salle):** The 6-foot-5, 285-pound offensive tackle prospect has seen a marked increase in his recruiting since Notre Dame offered him last summer. He now boasts 17 total offers from schools such as Florida, Michigan, Ohio State, and Vanderbilt. Jones has been to South Bend on multiple occasions and likes the campus and educational opportunities the Irish present to him. He also plays center on the De La Salle basketball team.

**OTHER OL PROSPECTS TO KEEP AN EYE ON:** Jovan Pruitt, Donell Stanley, Reilly Gibbons, Kyle Trout, Tommy Doles, James Hendren, Steven Moss, Viane Talamaivao, Alex Bars, Isaiah Wynn

### DEFENSIVE LINE

#### Target Number: 3-4

**[Jay Hayes](#) (Brooklyn, N.Y./Poly Prep):** Initially pegged as an offensive lineman by some services, Irish defensive coordinator Bob Diaco had his sights set on the 6-foot-5, 275-pounder as a defender from the start. That sat well with Hayes, who formed a strong relationship with Diaco very quickly. Even as offers from Alabama, Florida, Michigan, Ohio State, Oregon, Penn State and Wisconsin along with dozens of others came pouring in, Hayes kept coming back to the feeling he had for Notre Dame, a school he'd never visited and still hasn't. The idea of family along with the mixture of academics and athletics was something Hayes didn't believe he could find elsewhere, so he went ahead and committed to the Irish in November.

**[Andrew Trumbetti](#) (Demarest, N.J./Northern Valley):** Notre Dame became the instant leader for the 6-foot-4, 250-pounder when the Irish offered a scholarship at their summer camp. Trumbetti has maintained the Irish as his clear leader, but even before he landed the offer, he said he would take his time. The defensive end also has offers from Michigan State, Purdue, Virginia, Maryland, Rutgers and Boston College among others. He's also receiving interest from

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schools like Alabama, Florida, Michigan, Penn State and USC. Trumbetti already has plans to get back to South Bend for the Irish's Junior Day next month and he's excited to show his mother the campus.

**[Malik McDowell](#) (Detroit, Mich./Loyola):** The 6-foot-7, 290-pounder is one of the top junior targets in the Midwest and is definitely one of the Irish's top targets this cycle. The defensive end currently sports offers from all of the Midwestern powers – Notre Dame, Michigan, Michigan State, Ohio State and Wisconsin – along with others from Stanford, Oregon and Syracuse. The Spartans have made a strong early impression, but both he and his coach have been extremely impressed with the pitch from Irish assistant Chuck Martin.

**[Deondre Clark](#) (Oklahoma City, Okla./Douglass):** Notre Dame got in the race relatively early for Clark, offering the 6-foot-4, 245-pounder back in the fall. The defensive end also sports offers from programs like Oklahoma, Texas, LSU, South Carolina and Clemson among others. Obviously it'll be tough to pull him away from the Big 12 AND the SEC, but the Irish figure to have at least some shot. Clark had the chance to see the Irish defense up close in their win over the Sooners last fall, but Notre Dame will need to get him on campus.

**[Click here to see Clark's highlights](#)**

**[Khairi Clark](#) (Hollywood, Fla./Chaminade-Madonna):** Clark's coach said the 6-foot-4, 290-pounder had offers from virtually every school in the country last fall, but had him focused solely on football at the time. The season is over now and look for the Irish to try to get him on campus as soon as possible. Notre Dame has already caught his eye and that of his teammate, 2014 linebacker Richard Yeargin III, which is a good start for this elite Florida tackle.

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**[Da'Shawn Hand](#) (Woodbridge, Va./Woodbridge):** The 6-foot-4, 240-pounder is the owner of one of the firmest handshakes in the Class of 2014 as well as one of the most impressive offer sheets. Pegged as one of the first five-star recruits and possibly the top player in the entire class by the recruiting services, the defensive end has offers from Notre Dame, Alabama, LSU, Oklahoma, Michigan, Ohio State, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vanderbilt among dozens of others. He currently has a top five of Alabama, Michigan, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia Tech, but hasn't ruled out making changes to that group.

**[Lorenzo Carter](#) (Norcross, Ga./Norcross):** Another talented defensive line prospect from the South, this 6-foot-5, 221-pounder has an offer sheet that includes Notre Dame, Georgia, Georgia Tech, South Carolina, Florida, Florida State, Alabama, Auburn, Michigan, Ohio State and Tennessee among several others. Irish assistant Scott Booker has made Norcross one of his frequent stops while in Georgia, but Carter isn't showing any favorites at this point.

**[Andrew Williams](#) (McDonough, Ga./Eagle's Landing Christian):** The Irish have already made a name for themselves in McDonough by landing 2013 defensive end prospect Isaac Rochell and now will turn their attention to Rochell's teammate and defensive end bookend. The 6-foot-4, 241-pound junior finished 2012 with over 70 tackles (10 of those for losses), 18 sacks and three blocked punts. The Georgia native is already over 30 offers that include Alabama, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, Louisville, Michigan State, Mississippi, North Carolina, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Texas, Texas A&M, USC, Virginia Tech, Washington, and Wisconsin just to name a few. Williams has visited South Bend twice now with Rochell and claims that the Irish are already one of his top schools. He's stated that the Notre Dame coaches have told him he's their number one target for 2014.

**[Enoch Smith](#) (Chicago, Ill./Mt. Carmel):** The 6-foot-3, 265-pound defensive tackle plays in

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the Chicago Catholic League Blue Division, which is considered by many to be one of the toughest football divisions in the Midwest. His team won the Class 8A state championship this past season as well. Smith has eight offers on the table thus far from schools like Notre Dame, Cincinnati, Purdue, and Illinois. He currently has Notre Dame at or near the top of his list and hopes to make a decision before the start of his senior season.

**OTHER DL PROSPECTS TO KEEP AN EYE ON:** Solomon Thomas, Craig Evans, Jesse Aniebonam, Natrell Curtis, Melvin Keihn, Colt Pettit, Peyton Newell