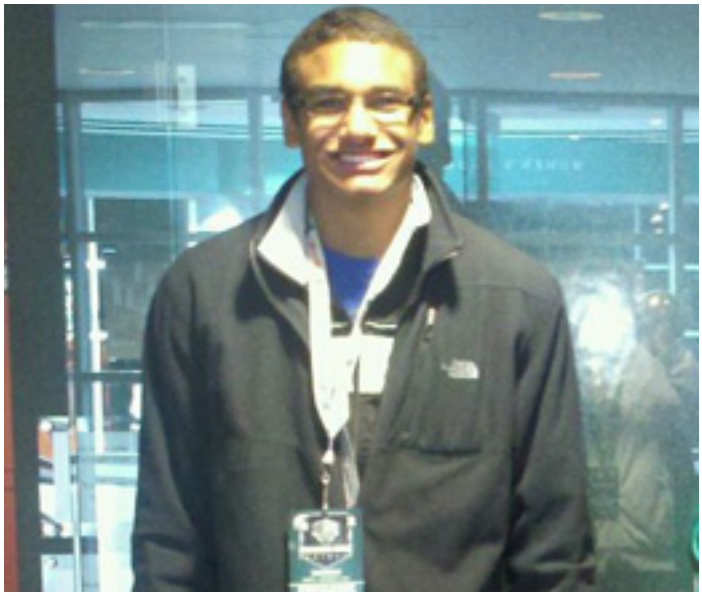

No college coach saw Austin Torres play more than Mike Brey as the Notre Dame men's basketball head coach, in an attempt to land Torres' summer teammate Demetrius Jackson, hitched his recruiting schedule to that of Torres and Jackson's AAU program.

"I saw Austin play 18 times because I saw Demetrius play 18 times this summer," said Brey.

So other coaches around the country found themselves calling Brey to inquire about the 6-foot-6, 200-pound forward from Mishawaka's Penn High School.

"I'd hang up the phone after selling him to another school and say, 'You know what? I think I'm talking *myself* into this guy.'" Brey said.

Brey also knew Torres and his family for some time and served as an advisor of sorts at different times throughout the process.

"As we went through this, he kind of grew on me a little bit as an athletic, dirty work guy," he said. "He can defend almost any position out there. What I was impressed with was certainly the athlete he is, he plays above the rim, how hard he plays and how tough he's become."

Torres had been committed to Central Michigan before Brey finally came all of the way around and offered him a scholarship shortly after securing Jackson's commitment. It was a dream come true for Torres, who grew up in nearby Granger.

The least heralded of the four prospects Brey and his staff signed on National Signing Day this month, Torres will certainly be motivated.

"I think he does have a little chip," acknowledged Brey.

But Torres also knows what direction that motivation should lead him. He understands that his role won't be to come in and try to prove himself as one of the team's leading scorers, but to do the little things.

"Austin already understands that's the only way I get on the floor at Notre Dame; guarding these guys, rebounding, doing that," said Brey.

"When I met with him to talk about it, he said, 'Coach, that's what I want to do. That's how I play for you.' That's refreshing to have a guy like that who already understands that instead of trying to tweak a guy who maybe was a scorer in high school."

Torres should have time to grow into that role.

"We've talked about a five-year program," said Brey. "That's something we really want to consider with him. It's a patient process with him."

That decision won't need to be officially for about another year, but the idea of starting work toward a Masters degree from Notre Dame is an attractive one.

“This is a very, very motivated student,” said Brey.

“I think he and his family are very intrigued about that. There’s no question that him getting a little older and stronger, being a five-year man would be a benefit, so it’s something we’re going to very seriously consider.”