LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. – **Alex Anzalone** enjoyed participating at The Opening and at Gridiron Kings this summer, but the Notre Dame linebacker commit is really enjoying himself down here this week at the Under Armour All-America Game.

“With the pads, that changes the game completely,” said Anzalone. “You have to think about the run and the pass; read your keys and go hard all of the time. You can’t take a play off or else you’ll get exposed.”

Overall, Anzalone is enjoying himself.

“It’s been pretty cool getting all of the gear, seeing all of the players you know from The Opening and places like that, getting back and having fun,” he said.

“Also, playing at a different level – pretty much the college level – different speed, different physicality from high school, it’s just a different experience overall. I think it’ll definitely help me out in the long run.”

The Pennsylvania native has been extremely impressed with the level of play in the practices leading up to Friday’s game.

“It’s completely different for me,” said Anzalone, who is fresh off a state championship with his Wyomissing Area High School squad.

“I come from a small classification. Defensively, it’s tougher just because you have to get used to the play development, which is so much faster. The players are faster, the linemen are huge and you have to take on blocks and get off them fast and have great technique or else you’ll get exposed.”

Anzalone is more than holding his own though. He’s excelled in pass coverage all week and claimed the Obstacle Course title over fellow linebackers Reuben Foster, Ben Boulware and Matthew Thomas.

He’s shifted between outside and inside linebacker spots on the Black Team defense and could play both on Friday.

“They’re having me play Sam and maybe a little bit of Will, it depends on the game,” he said. “Maybe because of the personnel we have, but they like me at outside. I can play either one.”

The future Irish linebacker has the pleasure of being coached by former Penn State star linebacker LaVar Arrington.

“It’s cool,” laughed Anzalone, who has been dubbed ‘Quasimodo’ by Arrington because of his college destination.

“He’s a funny dude. We actually have a common buddy in (former NFL lineman) Ross Tucker, so we have bonded pretty well. He went to Penn State, so he knows the area. The way he coaches, it’s just great to learn from him.”

Anzalone will enroll at Notre Dame in a little over a week.