

Mustipher Set To See ND

Written by Christian McCollum

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[Sam Mustipher](#) has been looking forward to visiting South Bend for a while now and the 2014 Maryland offensive lineman will get the chance to do so this weekend when he attends Notre Dame's Junior Day.

The 6-foot-4, 290-pounder from Our Lady of Good Counsel (Olney, Md.) already holds more than a dozen offers from schools like Florida, Ohio State, Michigan, Penn State, North Carolina, North Carolina State and Maryland among others. He's looking forward to seeing the Notre Dame campus, coaches, players and academics, but he's also hoping to add another offer to his list.

"It would definitely mean a lot to me," Mustipher said of possibly being offered by the Irish. "It's a great program with a lot of great linemen coming out of there."

"I go to school right now with Russ Grimm's nephew. His family is really pushing Notre Dame on me. His dad (Donn) went there and he talks to me about it all of the time. He says if I go up there, I'm going to love it as soon as I get up there. I'm definitely looking forward to getting up there."

Mustipher has already formed pretty solid relationships with Notre Dame assistants Kerry Cooks and Scott Booker.

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He's made stops at Maryland, West Virginia, Penn State and Ohio State and is planning more trips.

"During the springtime, I'm scheduling visits right now to Clemson, Michigan and maybe South Carolina or Vanderbilt," he said.

He knows what he'll be looking for when he's making his visits.

"First and foremost is academics," said Mustipher. "I've got to get that degree. Definitely coaching stability. I want to know that the coach is going to be there, at least for my first year there so I can get a solid foundation and solid relationship with the coaching staff.

"After that, the ability to win a national championship and the ability for me to play in the NFL and get to the next level. That's always the goal of every football player and I'd love to make that happen. I want to go to a school where I get the best opportunity to do that."

Brian Kelly's recent flirtation with the Philadelphia Eagles won't hurt the Irish's pursuit of Mustipher, who understands the business and isn't in a rush to make a decision.

"There have been a lot of coaching changes this offseason, that's why I think I'm going to wait to commit," he said. "A lot of guys in my class are committing early. I'm not one of the guys who wants to do that. I want to make sure I make the best decision as far as the rest of my life goes. Four or five years in college is going to determine the degree I get and whether or not I go to the NFL."

Also, Notre Dame's performance against Alabama in the BCS National Championship Game won't damage the way Mustipher views the Irish's chances at winning a national title.

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“It doesn’t really concern me at all,” he said. “That was their first time there in a while. To have an undefeated season is a thing in itself. Getting there is an accomplishment. If they came back with the team they had this year next year, they would win the national championship no problem, I believe.

“With a freshman quarterback, there’s not much you can do against a defense like Alabama’s with a ton of NFL-ready players. I see the coaching staff getting them back on track right away. They’ve got a lot of talent on offense, defense and across the board.

“It’s not really a concern for me. I know their coaches will keep their heads on straight, keep that confidence and I’m looking forward to seeing what they do next year.”