By just about any way you could measure it, **Dillon Bates'** trip down to San Antonio earlier this month for the U.S. Army All-American Underclassmen Combine was a complete success.

"I went down there, put up some good numbers, did really well in one-on-ones and came out with the defensive MVP and a spot on the team for next year," the 2014 Florida linebacker said.

"It really means a lot just to know the caliber of players that have come out of that game. Just to know that I'm right up there with them is really, really crazy. It's really humbling to know that I'm right there with them. It was really cool to have that honor."

The 6-foot-3, 218-pounder from Ponte Vedra High School (Ponte Vedra, Fla.) didn't know that MVP awards would be handed out, but definitely had his eye on earning an invitation to next year's Army All-American Bowl.

"I was obviously ultimately trying to get on the team for next year, but I also wanted to showcase my talent, play against top competition and know that I can compete on one of the biggest stages with the best talent in the country," he said.

He definitely did that en route to claiming MVP honors.

“From what I’ve seen, they liked how I performed in one-on-ones,” Bates said of what analysts saw in naming him MVP. “I could have four picks, but I dropped a few. I had pretty good numbers. I had a 4.57 in the 40, a 35-inch vertical and a pretty good shuttle. The combination of both, I feel like I put up good numbers and feel like performed pretty well.”

Bates is the owner of an already-impressive scholarship list that includes Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas A&M, Vanderbilt and Virginia among others. Since the bowl season wrapped up, several programs have visited Ponte Vedra.

“In the past few weeks, we’ve had a lot of schools come by just to see us,” said Bates.

Irish assistant Tony Alford is expected soon.

“I’ve been in contact with him and he’s been telling me he’s trying to get down here as soon as he can,” Bates said.

Bates almost made a trip to Notre Dame in November, but wasn’t able to make it. Instead, he’s looking into visiting South Bend sometime soon.

“Hopefully sometime during the spring I can get out for a spring practice,” said Bates. “From what (Alford has) told me, it’d be best for me to come individually so it’s not a big, huge group with 100 guys. He said the best bet would be for me to come during a spring practice, so I can get a feel for what it would be like to be an athlete there and be on campus with everybody else.”

Bates is honored by the Irish’s interest and offer.

“It’s awesome,” he said. “With Notre Dame being such a high caliber school with high caliber

talent and all of the tradition that comes with Notre Dame and the legendary players from Notre Dame, it's really humbling to know how much they care about me and want me to be a part of the program."

Bates, the son of former Tennessee and Dallas Cowboy standout Bill Bates, has already scheduled a couple unofficial visits for the coming weeks.

"We set up one for Tennessee (this weekend)," he said. "There's a Junior Day Feb. 2nd.

"We'll probably set up one with Florida, hopefully Alabama and Ohio State for sure."