

2013 Early Enrollees

Written by ISD Staff

Monday, 04 February 2013 21:21 - Last Updated Tuesday, 05 February 2013 09:23



National Signing Day is on Wednesday and we'll be providing full breakdowns of all those prospects expected to fax in their National Letters of Intent to Notre Dame, but today we can bring you breakdowns of the five players who have already enrolled at classes.

Notre Dame is set to bring in a quarterback, a pair of running backs, four receivers, two tight ends, five offensive linemen, two defensive linemen, three linebackers, four defensive backs. The Irish are also still in the running for a pair of California defensive linemen – Kylie Fitts and Eddie Vanderdoes. Fitts will announce his decision this evening while Vanderdoes will make his public on Wednesday evening. Notre Dame will also bring a punter in this class as a preferred walk-on, California's Andrew Antognoli.

QUARTERBACK

[MALIK ZAIRE](#)

Kettering, Ohio/Archbishop Alter

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6-1, 190/4.65

Rankings

ISD: ****

Rivals: ****

Scout: ****

247: ****

ESPN: ****

Comments: The Semper Fi All-American earned Elite 11 status the summer before his senior season and closed his high school career by throwing for more than 1,600 yards with 21 touchdowns and only four interceptions. He also ran for almost 1,000 yards and nine more scores. Zaire (pictured) committed to Notre Dame over offers from schools like Ohio State, Nebraska and Wisconsin among several others.

Alter Head Coach Ed Domsitz: "He should be able to compete pretty well. He understands the challenge that he's facing. He needs to be patient, he needs to work on the little things and he needs to work hard in the classroom. If he can do all of those things, he'll be fine.

"He's a dual-purpose quarterback. He can run the football, he did that for us very well and he can throw the ball. He's got a strong arm, so he can go deep. He's got nice touch on the short

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pass. He's accurate. He may be the most accurate quarterback I've ever coached. He does a nice job hitting that man on square-ins or crossing routes. We run an offense that's both wishbone and shotgun. He's had to read progressions. He had to check one, check two and even go to an outlet. He's had some experience with that."

ISD Resident Coach Sean Mele: Zaire is not a running back who's also trying to pass himself off as player who can throw the ball. He's a great passer with tremendous pocket instincts who also happens to have the ability to run the ball very effectively. He's exactly what Brian Kelly wants and can help the Irish as a true dual-threat quarterback cut from the same cloth as current Notre Dame quarterback Everett Golson. I'm not sure he's quite the player Golson has proven himself to be this past season, but he has all the tools. The question remains, however, whether or not he has the "it" factor that Golson has.

[Click for Mele's full evaluation](#)

WIDE RECEIVER

[JAMES ONWUALU](#)

St. Paul, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall

6-1, 205/4.51

Rankings

ISD: ****

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Rivals: ****

Scout: ****

247: ***

ESPN: ****

Comments: The Minnesota product was one of the first commits in Notre Dame's recruiting class for 2012 and became one of the group's top recruiters. Onwualu committed to Notre Dame over offers from schools like Arizona, California, Iowa, Michigan, Michigan State, Ohio State, Stanford, UCLA and Wisconsin among several others. Played running back and receiver at Cretin-Derham, the same school that produced former Irish wideout Michael Floyd. He had more than 1,200 all-purpose yards with 21 touchdowns in eight games as a senior and also returned an interception 94 yards for a score.

Cretin Derham Head Coach Mike Scanlan: "Whether you hand the ball to him or throw it to him, he's pretty impressive. He might be one of our best defensive backs. He could play wide receiver, he could play running back. I don't there's many who could get Division-I attention at three different positions, but I think James is one of them.

"I think he could play either. I like him at running back because that way you don't have to throw him the ball. I think people know their business. A place like Notre Dame, which knows what it's shopping for, if they think he can play wide receiver, I don't doubt it."

Mele: Onwualu will fit in well with the Irish offense, especially as a receiver who gets creative opportunities to be a ball carrier as well. His versatility made him a hot commodity during his recruiting process with many colleges that are looking for players who can play multiple positions well. He is a football player first and an athlete second – almost a throwback to the times when how one performed on the field meant more than his 40 time and vertical jump. He

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has the ability to maneuver around, through, or outrun a defense - traits that equate to one word – playmaker.

[Click for Mele's full evaluation](#)

[COREY ROBINSON](#)

San Antonio, Texas/San Antonio Christian

6-4, 195

Rankings

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Rivals: ****

Scout: ****

247: ***

ESPN: ***

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Comments: The son of Basketball Hall of Famer David Robinson. U.S. Army All-American had 67 catches for 1,414 yards (21.1 yards per reception) and 20 touchdowns in 2012. Robinson committed to Notre Dame over offers from schools like Iowa, Kansas, Navy, North Carolina and Wake Forest among others. Robinson is still fairly new to the game of football and showed tremendous improvement in both his junior and senior seasons. He showed the ability to make plays against the nation's best at The Opening.

San Antonio Christian WR Coach Brandon Parrott: "He realizes that A) there's nobody that can stop him playing him man-to-man and B) just put the ball in my area and I'll go make a play. He's playing with that type of confidence. You have got to just have that confidence that at any time, you want the ball to go make a play. If you're questioning yourself as a receiver then you can't ever be a consistent big-play maker.

"It's not just, 'Hey, I can make a play every once in a while.' It's, 'Hey, keep giving me the ball. I can make plays all night long if I need to.' In the red zone, that's what makes him such a difficult cover. He's got the height, he's got the leaping ability, he's got the wingspan, so he's tough to cover down there.

"He started playing football so late and he's such a good, humble kid. He's not one to step out there and be cocky or overconfident without having proved it first. We spent a good two and a half years where he didn't know whether he could be good or not. Now in the last year and a half, the light bulb has gone on that, 'Hey, I can be pretty good at this.' He's been exposed to great athletes this summer, which challenged him and he feeds off of challenges. He's like, 'OK, you stopped me once. You're not going to get me a second time.'"

Mele: Robinson was a great pickup for Coach Kelly and the Irish. He offers a big, tall target with great hands and someone who will go up and snag the ball out of the air. He can be a versatile player who will perform at a high level whether he plays wide receiver or tight end. He does the little things well and will give 100 percent effort in everything he does. He's a real character kid who'll fit right in with Notre Dame's current roster.

[Click for Mele's full evaluation](#)

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[Click here for Robinson's highlights](#)

TIGHT END

[MIKE HEUERMAN](#)

Naples, Fla./Barron Collier

6-4, 215/4.75

Rankings

ISD: ****

Rivals: ****

Scout: ****

247: ****

ESPN: ****

Comments: Heuerman committed to Notre Dame over offers from schools like Alabama,

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Auburn, Clemson, Florida State, Louisville, LSU, Michigan State, Ohio State, Oregon, South Carolina and Vanderbilt among several others. He was one of the Irish's top tight end targets this cycle. His brother plays tight end at Ohio State.

Former Barron Collier Head Coach Mark Ivey: "Mike's a great player and he's a great young man. He's got some God-given talents that not everybody has...He's got great balance and he's got great stability once he gets his hands into a block. A lot of that comes through hard work, but a lot of it is just talent. He knows that and he doesn't underappreciate what he's got. He definitely works to make himself better."

Mele: Heuerman fits the mold of other great tight ends that have walked through the doors at Notre Dame. He's physical, can set the edge, plays inline or outside, and catches everything thrown in his direction. Obviously it's too soon to predict whether he'll be as good as Tyler Eifert, but he certainly has all the tools to try and reach those heights. Any of his run technique flaws are easily fixable and I don't see that being an issue in the future. Getting him on campus early will help him get a jump start on the many things Notre Dame tight ends are asked to do.

[Click for Mele's full evaluation](#)

OFFENSIVE LINE

[STEVE ELMER](#)

Midland, Mich./Midland

6-6, 300

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Rankings

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Scout: ****

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Comments: The U.S. Army All-American played well down in San Antonio and more than held his own against some of the top defensive linemen in the nation. Elmer was the Irish's first verbal commitment in the Class of 2013 way back in September of 2011. He committed to Notre Dame over offers from schools like Michigan, Michigan State, Mississippi State and Stanford among others.

Midland Head Coach Eric Methner: "He's an awesome player, a dominant offensive lineman, terrific athlete, incredibly hard worker, super kid. He's got very good feet for his size. He's pretty fast. The biggest thing is he is continuously trying to learn and get better.

"He has a great work ethic, is very eager to learn, very humble young man and was willing to do whatever it took to be successful."

Mele: Elmer is a tremendous prospect who has a huge upside. He'll make an impact during his time at Notre Dame - the only question is how early. He has the size and strength to contribute right away, but o-line is a tough position for a freshman to get playing time. Players with his size

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and athleticism are rare, and he will use these things to excel in Notre Dame's offense. Whether run blocking or in pass protection, he has all the tools to be a big-time player and will delight Irish Fans for the next four years.

[Click for Mele's full evaluation](#)