Even after signing five offensive linemen in the class of 2013 Notre Dame will continue to focus on building depth and bringing in talent to the position in 2014. Whether that means signing four or five more next year remains to be seen, but the Irish are making sure they're leaving no stone unturned in trying to attract the best of the best to come to South Bend. **Donell Stanley** from South Carolina is an offensive guard or tackle who is considered by many of the services to be one of the top players in his class. A hulking figure with good mobility, Stanley has drawn the attention of 14 other schools besides the Irish including Alabama, LSU, and USC. As of right now he seems to favor the southern schools, but would still like to eventually get to the Midwest to check out Notre Dame.

FRAME/GROWTH POTENTIAL

Stanley is already a monster prospect at 6-foot-3 and right round 320 pounds. He looks every bit that size on film and with the way he throws his weight around I have no reason to believe he isn't that big. With offensive linemen that are his size at such a young age the concern is being able to carry the weight in a productive and athletic manner. This will be monitored like mad when he gets to college and the strength and conditioning staff will make sure he's at his optimal weight to be able to perform. Could the Latta High School standout get up to 340 pounds? Absolutely, but if he can't get out of his stance quickly or move laterally with any effectiveness they'll have him down to a weight where he can do those things more efficiently. There's too much of a commitment from the college to the player to allow him to balloon to a weight where's he's essentially wasting a scholarship.

ATHLETIC ABILITY

Stanley actually moves well for his size and although his feet haven't quite caught up to exactly how big he is there are moments when he flies around the field pretty quickly. He lacks some of the initial explosiveness you'd like to see from an elite lineman, but once he gets moving and his legs start churning, the feet aren't far behind. He moves well laterally, but again, most of the time the first step or two doesn't have the zip you'd want it to have. That being said, as he gets older this will improve with agility training and just the simple fact of his body getting used to moving quickly with the weight he's carrying.

Stanley has a good combination of natural strength and weight room strength. There are times on film when he'll use his natural strength to push people on the ground or reach out with one hand and pull someone toward him without even straining himself. Then there are other times when he locks up on a defender and uses that lower body weight room strength to drive him 15 yards downfield. Once he gets his hands on a defender and starts pushing and driving his legs there isn't a chance of getting free. Obviously he has the size to back him up, but he's not lacking in the strength department by any means.

SKILLS/TECHNIQUE

What I often see from players as big as Stanley is the tendency to stand up right up out of their stances at the snap. The main reason they do this is because with their size they don't need a low pad level to overpower 99% of the players they face in high school. Stanley is definitely too high off the ball, but he gets away with it because once the defender is in to him he absorbs the initial rush and starts pushing back the other way. Look, I get it, if he was 6-foot and 220 pounds nobody would be after him, but he's going to face guys that are just as big and strong as he is in college and he will get destroyed if he stands up off the snap. You can see it on film for yourself – he has no knee bend or power in his hips. He needs to focus on improving his pad level and bending his knees more. The day will come when his technique and size will need to work together to be his biggest asset.

As I mentioned earlier when talking about his strength, once he locks up, the defender is rendered useless. A big part of that is his hand placement. He really does a nice job of getting his hand inside the defender and pushing him where he wants. He does the same thing when he pass blocks, which is half the battle. His arms are long enough to keep the defender away from his body and make most pass rush moves ineffective.

Stanley's pass block technique isn't bad, but he needs to get out of his stance and slide back a little quicker. He ends up having to turn and run right away rather than keeping his shoulders square. I can see him getting beat back inside with a counter move because his momentum is always going up field. I like how he fights though and brings the same edge he has as a run blocker to his pass blocking.

I can see there's a certain toughness to his character as well. He's not one of these "gentle giants" you often find who are big and strong, but afraid to use that to their advantage on the field. He's intense and likes the physical nature of the game, which will be a huge advantage once he hones some of the technique issues he has.

OVERALL

I like Stanley as a guard in college. He has the bulk and strength to handle the bigger defensive tackles and nose-guards he'll see on the next level. I don't believe he's tall enough nor has the footwork to be a great pass blocking tackle against some of the speed rushers he would be facing. He needs to get his pad level lower and work on his initial burst, but he's got a mean streak and likes to get after it on a regular basis. You can't teach his size and I believe he's going to be a force inside for whatever team he ends up signing with.

GRADES

Size: 90 (a huge player – may get taller, but not essential)

Strength: 90 (a brute on the field)
Speed: 70 (for his size he moves pretty well)
Athletic Skills: 80 (agile enough to get the job done, needs to be more explosive)
Technique: 80 (pad level must get lower – other than that he does some good things)

Versatility: 80 (guard for sure – could be a tackle in a pinch)

Upside: 4.0 (early playing time depends on development between now and college)
Overall Grade: 4.0

GRADE KEY

90-100 – Elite/Exceptional: Skill set is rare and gives prospect ability to dominate
80-89 – Very Good/Outstanding: Skill set is a significant strength
70-79 – Average: Skill set is solid, not a significant weakness
60-69 – Below Average: Skill set is not a strength for this player and could become a liability
50-59 – Very Poor: Prospect does not possess this trait and it is a definite liability

OVERALL/UPSIDE GRADE KEY

5 – Elite: Player is one of the best players at his position nationally, potentially dominant
4 – Very Good/Outstanding: Player is a potential standout and starter, could also play early
3 – Solid: Player is a potential contributor, could eventually start down the road
2 – Below Average: Player does not possess the talent to be a significant contributor
1 – Poor: Let's be honest, Notre Dame is not going to bring in anyone with a one!