

## Recruiting Week in Review

Written by Joe Bradshaw

Tuesday, 19 February 2013 08:34 -

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Notre Dame finished the 2013 football recruiting class with a bang by earning the signature of Eddie Vanderdoes. His signing let them finish in the top five in recruiting on nearly every recruiting service's rankings. Of course, recruiting is the ultimate perpetual motion machine so the Irish coaching staff had already turned its attention to 2014 recruiting long before the signatures were faxed in on National Signing Day. At this point, the staff is evaluating talent, issuing offers and attempting to make preliminary decisions on how many players they need at the various positions in the 2014 class. Last week Irish Sports Daily spoke to two young men that have been evaluated, recruited and issued scholarship offers. Obviously, the Notre Dame coaching staff would love to see their signatures on the dotted line nearly a year from now. What have you been missing by not being a member of Irish Sports Daily?

[Germaine Pratt](#) , S, 6-3, 190, High Point Central High School, High Point, NC hopes to be the next in a line of elite Irish safeties that have made their way to the NFL. Of course, Pratt, who has yet to begin his senior year in high school, has a long way to go before really considering that, but if history proves to be any indication, the idea may not be far-fetched.

Former Notre Dame safety Harrison Smith had a breakout rookie season with the Minnesota Vikings this season and most draft analysts predict current Irish safety Zeke Motta to be a fourth or fifth round draft pick. Pratt's head coach, Wayne Jones, believes that his junior standout may be on the cusp of developing next level skills.

"Really, you can't adjust to the college game until you get to the college game , but I think continuing to improve his strength and speed will help him at the next level," Jones said of his

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safety Pratt. "He already runs a 4.5, but if he gets down to a 4.4 I could really see him playing on Sundays in the NFL."

Of course, Pratt possesses a host of other attributes that, before he becomes an NFL prospect, have made him an enticing recruit for a number of top college programs.

"Germaine is an aggressive, smart football player," stated Jones. "He has an incredible knowledge of the game and a very high football IQ. In the game he's one of those guys that likes to fly around the football, whether it's in the air or on the ground. He's a guy who studies the game and watches film all the time, so that he'll know what the opponent's going to do the next week. He's just one of those guys that really loves the game."

Pratt assesses himself more bluntly.

"I'm very aggressive and I'll help my team in any way I can," he stated.

University football programs have certainly taken notice. The talented North Carolinian has received a number of early scholarship offers and numerous other schools are looking at him very hard.

"I believe he's up to five offers and those are from North Carolina State, Notre Dame, Tennessee, Virginia and Wake Forest," said Jones. "He is hearing from a lot of other schools also and I wouldn't be surprised if quite a few more offers started coming soon."

Notre Dame's offer has intrigued both Pratt and his head coach. They are very interested in learning more about what the Irish have to offer.

"I really like Notre Dame and it's a school I'm very interested in," Pratt said. "I'm really looking forward to learning everything I can about them."

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Jones echoed Pratt's thoughts about Notre Dame.

"Notre Dame's always had a good traditional program. They really put themselves back on the map this year and I believe coach (Brian) Kelly is doing a great job of getting some good players in and getting those guys to believe in themselves once again."

After discussing with Pratt his offer list, Jones is confident that if a decision needed to be made today his star safety would have Notre Dame at or near the top of his list. According to Jones that is good for the Irish because they would not only be getting a great football player but an even better person.

"He really, really is a good kid and is a grown man in a boy's body," Jones related. "He's just a high character kid and people out here in the community love him."

Pratt doesn't have a Notre Dame visit set up at this time but would like to in the near future. Jones is certain that if Pratt manages to get on campus Notre Dame's position on his list of potential destinations will only improve.

[Melvin Keihn](#) , DE, 6-3, 225, Gilman School, Baltimore, MD isn't exactly certain how many scholarship offers he currently possesses but definitely noted one of his more recent ones.

"That makes me really happy," Keihn said of his Notre Dame football scholarship offer. "Notre Dame is one of those schools I'm really looking at highly. It seems like a place I could be happy at. I'm pumped for that, I'm actually pumped."

It's not surprising that a student athlete attending Gilman School in Baltimore would be impressed by the academic character of Notre Dame. Gilman dates back to the late nineteenth century and has not wavered from its mission of educating the total young man in its 116 years of existence. The similarities to Notre Dame must be strong for Keihn (pictured).

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“Of course I know Notre Dame has great academics,” related Keihn. “That’s one of the things that’s really pulling me in. I read some stuff on their academics and it’s really interesting to me. It’s just fun. I feel like I would be at a place to get a good degree and also the football team. I’ve watched them on TV and seen some of their stuff on TV on how they did on defense. It’s just pretty cool. You really should pick a program that has such a strong academic program and has a football team that’s up there.”

In addition to Notre Dame, the talented Marylander has received football scholarship offers from Virginia, Virginia Tech, Maryland, North Carolina, Rutgers, Boston College, West Virginia, Wake Forest and others. Though he professes no early favorites, the Irish have certainly caught his eye.

“Notre Dame is one of the schools that I really like,” stated Keihn. “I know (Virginia) is a great school that I also like with great academics. Georgia Tech is another school with great academics as well; schools like that and also (North Carolina) and Virginia Tech.

Keihn has already visited Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland. At some point he would like to get to South Bend for a Notre Dame visit but nothing has yet been set up.

Though the class of 2014 is now the primary focus of college football coaches, Keihn isn’t in any hurry to make a decision. In fact, he’s very flexible about when his decision will actually come.

“I just try to take it one day at a time,” he said. “I have the best coaches in the world to help me with this. I’m just going to take my time.”

These two summaries represent just a sample of the Notre Dame football recruiting information available each week on Irish Sports Daily.