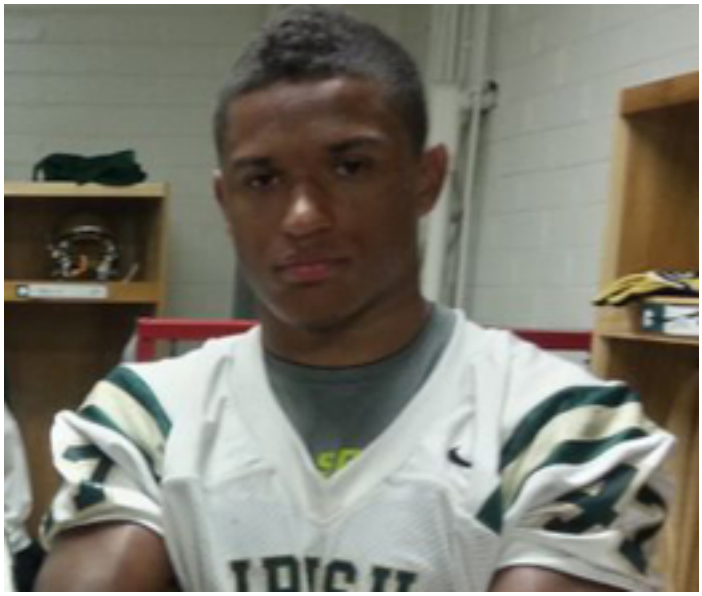

Notre Dame hosted one of the top 2014 running backs in the country last weekend in Elijah Hood and the Irish also hosted one of the nation's top 2014 linebackers recently in **Dante Booker Jr.**

"He visited on Monday," St. Vincent-St. Mary (Akron, Ohio) head coach Dan Boarman said of the touted linebacker.

Booker Jr. holds offers from several big-time schools including Notre Dame, Ohio State, Michigan, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Illinois, Maryland and Indiana among others.

"First of all, it's just his athletic ability," Boarman said of the attention Booker Jr. is receiving.

"He's 6-3, 220 pounds and he can run. He moves extremely well, his lateral movement is excellent. He's got the kind of frame on him, he's only going to get bigger. You could see him blowing up and getting much bigger."

St. Vincent-St. Mary is known for its basketball program, which produced LeBron James. Booker Jr. is currently playing for the Irish in the state tournament.

“Dante hasn’t played basketball, but came out this year and he’s starting,” Boarman said.

Notre Dame has been in on Booker Jr. heavy, but that isn’t surprising.

“Everybody in the country has been in on him pretty heavy,” said the coach, who hasn’t spoken with Booker Jr. since his trip to South Bend.

Booker Jr. has also made trips to Ohio State and Michigan while Tennessee, UCLA and Alabama are among several other programs showing serious interest. He’s also a standout away from the field, according to his coach.

“He’s just a great kid,” said Boarman. “He’s a hard-working young man. He’s really quiet. He’s much more mature than his age. He knows what he wants and he’s going to take his time.”

The talented 2014 prospect isn’t going to rush his decision, but could have one relatively soon.

“We’ve talked and I think he’ll probably make a decision by the summer,” his coach said. “He’s playing it right. He’s leaving his options open. He wants to make sure that he makes the correct choice and picks the school that’s best for him and best for the university he goes to.”

A few factors will come into play when he’s deciding what school is best for him.

“The academic environment is going to be very important for him, but I also think he wants to make sure it’s the right fit for the particular skills that he has,” Boarman said. “He understands the recruiting game. He understands everybody is patting him on the back and telling him how great he is, but he also understands that once he makes his decision, it’s a little bit different.

“He does want to make sure it’s the right university for him. Having his parents see him play, that’s going to be important.”