

Bates Eyes Spring Visits

Written by Christian McCollum

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[Dillon Bates](#) is quite familiar with the University of Tennessee. His father, Bill, played for the Volunteers and the 2014 Florida linebacker has made multiple trips to Knoxville, including one for a junior day last month.

“I’m actually going back up there this weekend,” Bates said. “We’re trying to get a round-trip of everywhere to see a few practices. We’re going to Tennessee this weekend and we’re trying to plan it out from there for a trip next weekend.”

He enjoyed his most recent trip to Tennessee.

“It was good,” he said. “I got a chance to sit down with some of the coaches and some of the other recruits over there and take a tour of their new facilities and all of that. It went really well.”

And he is looking forward to his next.

“I’m looking forward to really sitting down with the linebackers coach there, Coach (Tommy) Thigpen and just talking football,” he said. “I’m trying to see how they see where I’ll be playing and seeing an actual practice. I think it’s their first day of practice there. I’m looking forward to seeing how they actually coach.”

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But the 6-foot-3, 218-pounder from Ponte Vedra High School (Ponte Vedra, Fla.) has several other offers and is still very open in the process with more visits to come.

“Hopefully we will hit some of the schools that we didn’t get to in the fall; so Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Texas and some of those schools,” Bates said. “I think we’ll get back to Florida and Ohio State and hopefully maybe to the West Coast to see UCLA and USC. It’s going to be a busy spring and summer.”

Notre Dame assistant Tony Alford has been in regular contact with Bates and is trying to arrange a visit to South Bend soon.

“Hopefully this spring,” said Bates. “I’ve talked to him a bunch and he’s real animate about me getting up there and me being on campus to watch a practice whenever I can.”

Even with a long list of offers, Notre Dame is one school that’s definitely caught Bates’ attention.

“Looking back at college football, there are always teams in all of the football magazines,” he said. “One of the schools is definitely Notre Dame. And how Notre Dame just sounds and all of the tradition behind Notre Dame is just really great. It’s also a top-five school academically and that is all just really intriguing and something I want to look more in to.”

Bates doesn’t have any favorites yet, but hopes to trim his list relatively soon.

“I’m going to try to get a top 10 or something after this spring just because there are so many other offers coming in like Texas, UCLA, USC, Ole Miss and all these other schools who have recently offered,” he said. “It’s kind of made things a little more complicated, but after we visit a lot of places, I’ll definitely have at least a top 10 and by summer maybe a top five.”

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He's planning to take all five of his official visits in the fall before making an announcement.

"That will probably be ideal," he said.

"By then, I'll probably have a real good idea and sometime during one of the All-American games, the Under Armour or the Army one, I'll probably make my decision."