

2015 RB A Special One

Written by Christian McCollum

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[Jacques Patrick](#) is still months away from his junior season at Timber Creek High School, but some college coaches have already told the 2015 Florida running back that he could suit up for them next season.

“I wouldn’t doubt that,” Timber Creek (Orlando, Fla.) head coach Jim Buckridge chuckled.

“He’s a specimen. You see a lot of kids who are sophomores and juniors who really aren’t. They’re a year behind, they were held back for a reason or a lot of people start their kids late. He’s not. He’s a legit 16-year-old sophomore. He’s got a man’s body, but he’s got a baby face. He’s just one of those kids who as he gets older is going to get better and better and whoever ends up with him is going to get a great kid.”

The 6-foot-1, 213-pound Patrick picked up his 25th offer earlier this month as Notre Dame joined programs like Alabama, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, Georgia, LSU, Miami, Ohio State, Tennessee and USC among several others.

“He’s getting a lot of attention as a 16-year-old, but he’s handled it really well so far,” said Buckridge. “Obviously he’s a good football player, there’s no doubt. He’s a good kid in the classroom. He’s a leader by example. He works hard in the classroom. He’s a top-notch kid and he’s going to get better and better on the football field. He understands he’s got to keep his grades up, but he’s an A/B student. He’s a real solid kid.”

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Patrick is a versatile back.

“He’s a downhill power back, but he’ll also fool you with his speed,” his coach said. “If you go out there and clock him in the 40, I don’t know what his 40-time would be, it would not be great. But he runs the same time in pads that he runs with nothing on. He’s one of those kids who is deceptive and he wears you out.

“He’ll probably average 25, 30 carries a game for us next year and there will be games where he won’t even play in the second half because we’ll be up. There were a couple of games where he only carried eight, nine times in the first half and had 200 yards as a sophomore. He’ll wear you out. You get tired of tackling him later in the game and that’s what you need. That’s what everybody looks at. Everybody is getting away from the smaller backs. They want that big, physical kid. He’s got good hands. He understands the game. He’ll run a Wildcat type of offense for us because he throws the ball well. He actually grew up being a quarterback until he got to high school. He’s just a special kid who can do a lot of different things.”

Timber Creek saves Patrick’s poundings for Friday nights and he’s usually the one delivering them, but he can also make plays in space.

“He’s a physical runner, but he’s still going to make moves on you,” said Buckridge. “He’s not just pounding it every down. We don’t tackle in practice so he’s fresh on Friday nights. We do a lot of drills, but we don’t ever take him to the ground. A lot of teams beat on their kids, we don’t and we think it’s important to be ready on Friday. He gets hit a lot, but not during practice. He’s going to be fresh.

“He’s a smart kid. His conditioning is going to have to be better next year because he’s going to carry the ball a lot more, but he played basketball this year. He lost about 15 pounds, got rid of the baby fat. Now he’s back in the weight room. He’s really never spent a full year in the weight room, so when he puts that weight back on with muscle, he’s going to be a beast to handle next year.”

Some services have Patrick listed as an athlete, but his coach sees him as a running back and

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so do college coaches, at least for now.

“Everybody is recruiting him as a running back,” said Buckridge. “I know some of them have come in and said, ‘Coach, he might get too big. He might have to play defense.’ But I don’t think so. After basketball, when he lost the weight I don’t think he’ll ever end up bigger than 225, so I think he’ll be able to stay at tailback.

“Again, he’s not a speed kid, but he’s not slow either. He’s not a 4.4 kid, but they’re not looking for that. They’re looking for like those Alabama backs that pound on you and wear you out.”