

## ND To Host Ohio Safety

Written by Christian McCollum

Tuesday, 19 March 2013 15:53 - Last Updated Tuesday, 19 March 2013 16:02

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[Darius West](#) doesn't have an offer from Notre Dame yet, but the 2014 Ohio safety already has a dozen BCS offers from the likes of Kentucky, Penn State, Vanderbilt, Purdue, West Virginia, Illinois, Missouri and Cincinnati among several others.

He'll be in South Bend this weekend for Notre Dame's Junior Day hoping to add the Irish to that list.

"I think the things that have really caught the attention of the big-time football programs are his extreme explosiveness and that nice mass of size and speed for the position," Lima Central Catholic head coach Jerry Cooper said.

"He's pretty big for a corner or a safety. He's about 195 pounds and he's ran some good times. He's been in that 4.4-range in his 40-time."

Cooper and his staff do all they can to get the most out of West.

"We try to play him on both sides of the ball and put him in as many special teams as we can to see if we can highlight his talents," the coach said. "He plays a wingback position for us where we not only throw him passes, but we hand him the ball out of the backfield. He plays every

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down on defense at corner. We try to put him in a position to make as many plays as possible.”

But West’s future is on defense.

“I don’t there’s any question he’s probably a defensive back,” said Cooper. “That’s where he’s really shown the ability to play at the next level. Everyone who has talked to him has talked to him about playing corner or safety. They’re kind of split.

“Some people like that real excessive length at that corner spot. He’s got really long arms and he’d be big and thick at corner, but some people like safety also. It’ll be interesting to see which one he ends up at.”

Notre Dame assistant Mike Elston is handling West’s recruitment and the Irish seem split themselves on West’s best position.

“I’m not sure they came right out and said corner or safety,” Cooper said. “I think they’re recruiting him as a defensive back and then they’ll try to figure out which one of those best fits him. I think they’re still in that evaluation process.

“They’ve shown some real interest and talked with him. The fact that he has 15 or 16 other Division-I offers has opened a lot of doors for him. There’s five or six Big Ten offers, there’s SEC offers and an ACC offer. I’m sure that Notre Dame is definitely in the loop when it comes to recruiting.”

Cooper calls West “a great kid.”

“One of the things that’s happened is that he’s really improved himself as a student,” the coach said. “We give him a lot of credit for that. He’s really working hard to be a student-athlete. His grade-point average has consistently been on the rise. We give Darius a lot of credit for that.

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“He’s really active. He’s a three-sport guy, he plays football, basketball and runs track. He’s a multi-sport guy, so he’s got a busy schedule. He’s really a likable kid in our community.”

West is taking the process in stride.

“He enjoys the opportunity to get out and see these different places. We told him to take advantage of trying to get to as many places as possible so he can really make an informed decision. Like any kid, he’s excited about the possibilities around him, but he’s definitely going into it with his mind and eyes wide open.”