

PROSPECT UPDATE- August 6th, 2009

Eastern Illinois announced three FBS transfers have joined the football team for 2009 when the team reported for fall camp. Among those is former Iowa starting quarterback **JAKE CHRISTENSEN** (6010, 205). He passed for 2,269 yards and 17 touchdowns as Iowa finished 6-6 during his sophomore campaign. He started two games as a junior and has not started since. He ended his playing career with Iowa in the Outback Bowl and is a former Army All-American Bowl participant out of Lockport (Ill.) High School.

Appalachian State quarterback **ARMANTI EDWARDS** (5110, 181) had an accident with a lawn mower during the first week of August and was immediately rushed to the hospital where he had several stitches ranging from the top to bottom of his foot. Edwards will miss 2-4 weeks but will play in the opener against East Carolina.

Former Houston quarterback **BLAKE JOSEPH** (6014, 215) has been cleared to play at Sam Houston State and will be eligible to play immediately for the Bearkats. Joseph spent four seasons with Houston and started five games during that stint. Joseph could be among the best quarterbacks in the Southland this season.

From an incident earlier in July 2009 Northern Iowa C **AUSTIN STEICHEN** (6020, 305, 5.40) was arrested on three charges and had the felony dropped on August 6th, making him eligible to play in 2009. The other charges should be dropped at a later date. Steichen earned 1st team All-Missouri Valley honors last year after starting just two games in 2007, playing left guard that season.

SPRING/SUMMER SMALL SCHOOL PROSPECT REPORT

There have been many happenings in the small school ranks both with draftable and free agent prospects since the spring. Here is the news out of the small school ranks you need to know when making visits this fall including off field incidents, transfers, and more!

OFF FIELD INCIDENTS

Some who keep up with top underclassmen names in the small schools might remember Cheyney WR **DOMINIQUE CURRY** (6021, 205, 4.50) who was perhaps one of the best receivers in the small school ranks from the 2005 through the 2007 seasons before sitting out last season to concentrate on basketball and track. His resume was quite impressive and includes 2005 PSAC Rookie of the Year, 2nd team All-PSAC East honors in '05 and '07 while earning 1st team honors in 2006. His last season on the gridiron was fairly impressive with 38 catches for 583 yards and three touchdowns in 2007. Curry is contemplating transferring this fall due to concerns about potentially getting the ball in his final season. Keep an eye on his destination this fall as he is a legitimate free agent prospect at this point.

One player whose status for playing this fall is still up in the air is West Texas A&M DE **EUGENE SIM** (6044, 245, 4.80) after an altercation in the spring where he allegedly took part in an off campus break in and was charged with burglary of habitation, a second degree felony. If his case is settled before the seas it is expected that he will rejoin the team but will not play for West Texas A&M until the case is settled. Based on current information it does not sound good for Sims but it is still a situation to check on this fall Sims has some ability. He earned 2nd team All-LSC South honors after transferring from Jones County J last year with 56 tackles, 13 tackles for loss, and 10 sacks on the season. Sims also tallied 8 quarterback hurries and flashed some skills as a potential free agent pass rusher.

In a bit of a surprise and somewhat unknown incident Northern Iowa C **AUSTIN STEICHEN** (6020, 30 5.40) was arrested in connection in an alleged assault in July 2009. According to sources, Steichen expected to have the charges dropped. Steichen earned 1st team All-Missouri Valley honors last year after starting just two games in 2007, playing left guard that season.

UT Martin WR **ROREN THOMAS** (5102, 165, 4.42) was involved in an altercation where some of his friends beat up someone and he was charged. It is not known how much he was truly involved but the school did not reinstate the speedy slot receiver and thus he is transferring to be closer to his home of St. Louis, Missouri where he will play for NAIA powerhouse Lindenwood. Thomas caught 42 passes for 79 yards, averaging 18.8 ypc and hauled in seven touchdowns. He also ran for 363 yards, averaging 17.3 yp and added three scores. Not only is his versatility good offensively but his ability was shown on special teams where he averaged 23.9 on 26 returns for 621 yards and one touchdown on kickoffs. Thomas has future aspirations to be a director of football operations in the NFL.

One potential situation that could come up this fall for scouts is the past of Abilene Christian OT **TONY WASHINGTON** (6061, 300, 5.24) whose raw talent projects him as a potential 3rd-4th round caliber prospect but has some off field issues that must be addressed, as many transfers do. Washington quickly established himself as one of the top offensive tackle prospects, regardless of division, in the nation after transferring from Tinity Valley College where he earned 1st team All-LSC South honors, OL of the Year, and 1st team All-American honors

Make sure to look up every prospect on this list as many players may lie about their past.

ADDITIONAL YEAR

Every year there are players who were expected to graduate but return and below is a list of a few players who are known to be back, despite expectations to be done last fall.

Many scouts made the trip to Central Oklahoma to check out RB **DEMETRIUS BIRMINGHAM** (5105 219, 4.75) last year only to find out he suffered injuries in a car accident in the off-season and while he tried to play in the first game he could not finish and took a medical redshirt. He ran for 29 yards on nine carries in the first game after earning 1st team All-LSC North honors in 2007 where he ran for 983 yards and one touchdown. Birmingham previously transferred from NE Oklahoma A&M where he played two seasons

There was confusion on the eligibility of Baker K **DEREK DOERFLER** (5107, 223, 5.28) who was expected to come out this past year but has gained another year of eligibility and will once again be

destination that scouts should want to visit. He earned 3rd team All-HAAC honors hitting 11 of 20 field goals with a long of 54 yards and nailing 44 of 51 PATs. His best season came in 2007 where he earned AFCA All-America honors and was named 1st team All-HAAC hitting 20 of 24 PATs and 23 of 32 field goals to average 72%, including a long of 62 yards.

Texas Southern welcomed in TE **JONATHAN HANNAH** (6033, 250, 4.87) who previously spent time at NC State and Florida State. He has not played in two years and while he lacks the speed for the next level given his size, he has shown great work ethic and is a player that could get looks with a solid senior season.

Holy Cross All-American QB **DOMINIC RANDOLPH** (6020, 224, 4.94) received an extra year this off season after applying for a medical redshirt. Randolph was slated to play in the 2009 East Coast Bowl but backed out when he realized this was a possibility. He earned honorable mention All-America honor and was named 1st team All-Patriot League and offensive player of the year after throwing for 3,838 yards with a 34-17 touchdown to interception ratio as a junior. Randolph has earned 1st team All-Patriot League honor and was named the offensive player of the year each of the last two seasons.

STATUS UP IN THE AIR

Delaware DT **BRANDON GILBEAUX** (6035, 282, 5.00) is an expected free agent type prospect after a season in which he put up 26 tackles, four tackles for loss, and one and a half sacks after transferring from Syracuse. The problem is that the former Freshman All-Big East selection (2006) could be academically ineligible this fall. This is a prospect to check in on come August as he could be a diamond in the rough.

TRANSFERS

Former LSU special teams performer FS **TYSON ANDRUS** (6004, 198, 4.55) redshirted in 2008 after transferring to Nicholls State. Andrus previously spent time at Ole Miss where he redshirted in 2005 but sat out in 2006 due to transfer rules. Andrus could be an instant impact performer for Nicholls State and is one to watch.

One player to keep tabs on is junior QB **PAT DEVLIN** (6-4, 223) who transferred from Penn State for more playing time and has landed at FCS powerhouse Delaware. Devlin apparently is attempting to be the next Joe Flacco by transferring down to enhance his draft status. There are many similarities as Devlin is the strong armed pocket passer as Flacco was. In backup duty last season he threw for 459 yards and four touchdowns, with no interceptions.

Many players enter college as a highly touted prospect and former Michigan DE **EUGENE GERMANY** (6022, 283, 5.00) certainly was that as he signed with USC out of school but did not attend the school before landing at Michigan where he redshirted in 2005 and played eight games in 2006. He then left the program where he attended Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, California and sat out last season at Central Washington. Germany has two years of eligibility but he could end up declaring for this year's draft due to academic issues.

Former Alabama standout linebacker **PRINCE HALL** has landed at Central Washington after being suspended heading into 2009 spring ball due to a violation of team rules and policies relative to behavior, according to Coach Nick Saban. Hall is expected to step right in and be one of the top linebackers at that level alongside Buddy Wood. Hall was a 2007 preseason 1st team All-SEC selection and finished 8th on the team with 58 tackles, one interception, one breakup, and five hurries in '07.

Another former SEC star is transferring down to the Division II level with former Arkansas FS **RASHA JOHNSON** (6004, 182, 4.50) arriving at Northeastern Oklahoma State.

One of the biggest name players to transfer down this off-season has been former Indiana QB **KELLEN LEWIS** (6004, 175, 4.50) who landed at Division II juggernaut Valdosta State. Lewis once had a promising career where he earned 2nd team All-Big Ten honors in 2007 and Freshman All-America plaudits in 2006 but had that career derailed somewhat when he was dismissed from the Hoosier program for a violation of team rules in June 2009. A position switch could be in the works for this athlete as well at just 6'1, 175 pounds and the athletic ability and speed to play wide receiver.

North Alabama hauled in several potential prospects this off-season with former Florida State WR **PRESTON PARKER** (5107, 194, 4.50), West Virginia SS **QUINTON ANDREWS** (5104, 208), and Marshall CB **J.J. JOHNSON** (5111, 186, 4.60) all landing at the D2 powerhouse. Parker has potential and one talent but ran into trouble after his standout sophomore campaign in which he caught 62 passes for 714 yards and three touchdowns. Johnson is a pure free agent type but both Parker and Andrews have drafted talent.

Parker ran into trouble in January 2009 where he was arrested for a DUI but was later found out he had smoked marijuana and did not have a high alcohol content. With that arrest, his concealed-weapon charges, and his involvement in the academic fraud scandal he was released from the team in January.

Andrews was a preseason All-Big East selection in 2008 after starting at the bandit safety spot where he tallied 51 tackles, 2.5 tackles for loss, and four breakups but ran into trouble when he was arrested for obstructing justice at a police stop involving former teammate Jason Gwaltney.

Johnson was dismissed from Marshall following two arrests in a six week period where he was arrested for driving under the influence and driving without insurance after being arrested on charges of disorderly conduct and obstruction.

Central Washington received yet another potential big time player for them as former Washington State LB **ANDY ROOF** (6034, 290, 5.27) has enrolled after being kicked out of school for his role in an assault in April 2008 after sitting out the previous year after his involvement in several incidents involving alcohol. He is expected to play offensive guard this fall.

Former Oregon quarterback **JUSTIN ROPER** (6'6, 204) announced that he will transfer to Montana for his last two seasons of eligibility after emerging from spring drills as the backup to Jeremiah Masoli after coming back from a knee injury he suffered in week 3 last year. Roper is a very solid player worth keeping an eye on after throwing for 610 yards and three touchdowns and rushing for 85 yards and one touchdown last season.

IUPUI not only has one of the top prospects in this draft class but has a transfer worth a look with the addition of former Florida State OT **JOE TONGA** (6050, 295) and will play either right guard or right tackle this fall.

fall. Tonga is a Mormon from Utah and is one of ten kids. Tonga also has six cousins that played in the NFL.

SUPERALITIVES

The most unknown prospect in terms of exposure and name recognition is a three-way tie this year with three players who are relatively unknown, even by fans at their own schools. The first is Fort Valley State WR/KR **RICARDO LOCKETTE** (6020, 205, 4.48) who has great size, bulk, strength, and speed but has not really put up big numbers. He won the NCAA D2 200M Championship this spring but caught just 19 balls for 277 yards and three touchdowns last season. His biggest damage was done in the return game where he brought back eight kickoffs for one touchdown, averaging 27.8 per kick return. Lockette is a potential late round or priority free agent type prospect. The next prospect on the list is South Dakota State OT **CASEY KNIPS** (6080, 308, 5.21) who started at left tackle and despite not earning any awards is rumored to be considered a top 150 prospect in this year's draft. One thing to remember with Knips is that he has had shoulder trouble in 2006 and needs to show more effort. He has the tools and potential but just needs to put it all together. The last name is Knips' teammate OT **CASEY BENDER** (6056, 292, 5.10) who only started two games due to an ankle injury he suffered against Youngstown State in 2008.

One interesting stat to remember about the 2008 Small School Draft Class is that every single one of them earned honorable mention or all-league honors as a junior or sophomore and none of these three prospects have done that thus far in their careers.

The top small school prospect in this draft could very well be The Citadel WR **ANDRE' ROBERTS** (51185) who ran in the 4.48-4.50 range this spring after putting up an incredible two-year stint with the Cadets. The standout receiver earned AFCA All-America honors and 1st team All-SoCon accolades as a receiver and return man during his junior year after hauling in 95 balls for 1,334 yards and 14 touchdowns. He also returned 24 punts for 461 yards, and three touchdowns. During his sophomore season he earned 3rd team All-American honors and 2nd team All-SoCon accolades with 78 catches for 1,060 yards, and 10 touchdowns. Not only has he been impressive on the gridiron but he was an All-SoCon performer in track in 2007 where he placed 3rd in the 4x100m relay.

Looking for the fastest player in this year's draft? Most are going to say Jacoby Ford at Clemson or Trindon Holliday at LSU and not even think about Newberry WR **KELTON TINDAL** (6021, 189) but you might want to. Tindal ran in the 4.22-4.31 range this spring and even clocked as low as 4.19 prior to his junior year. Tindal's outstanding 40 speed would not be projected accurately based on his field speed due to his exceptionally fast start in the 40-yard dash. He started bleeping on the radar after earning 1st team All-SoCon honors due to catching 39 passes for 745 yards and six touchdowns last season. He has great character but needs to get stronger and work on his routes as he is a pure vertical threat at this point.

POTENTIAL POSITION SWITCHES

Every year there are prospects whose talents translate to another position at the next level and this year there are several small school prospects that fit that mold. Below is a look at several of those, but probably not every one who will change positions.

Perhaps one of the more underrated defensive ends is South Dakota State DE **DANNY BATTEN** (6027, 250, 4.69) who has not received much attention from media outlets or buzz among scouting circles but has some serious talent. Batten is a coaching dream with his extremely high motor, explosiveness, and speed for a defensive end. He is the ideal pass rusher because of this but he has enough athletic ability that some might look at him as a 3-4 OLB because he can drop into coverage. He earned 1st team All-Great West honors as a sophomore and 1st team All-Missouri Valley honors as a junior after tally 142 tackles, 26.5 tackles for loss, and 12.5 sacks over that two-year span. Make sure to check in on this highly productive high motor prospect this fall!

It seems there is always a linebacker or linemen who lacks the skills for defense or seems to be a better fit as a fullback at the next level and this year that prospect comes out of Howard in DT **WILL CRONER** (6021, 279, 5.03) who was solid defensively with 43 tackles, 5.5 tackles for loss, an interception, three fumble recoveries, and a hurry at tackle but also had 2 carries for three yards and one reception for three yards at fullback. Expect to see Croner make the complete change to fullback at the next level.

One of the more highly rated prospects in this class is UMASS LT **VLADIMIR DUCASSE** (6050, 328, 5.33) who has an interesting story as he grew up in Haiti and moved to the United States in 2002. Ducasse needs to work on his flexibility, something that left tackles need, and he is inconsistent in pass protection times and lacks the ideal size for a tackle. He could kick inside to guard as he has the body type of a guard more than tackle at the next level anyway.

There is sure to be one hot prospect who causes debates in scouting department meetings as Appalachian State QB **ARMANTI EDWARDS** (5110, 181, 4.55) who has been one of the hottest quarterbacks in all college football over the last three years with two national championships, a win over Michigan, and a Walter Payton Award already under his belt. Edwards has not played any other position since lining up as a receiver as a junior in high school. With his size, speed, quickness, toughness, and explosiveness he could fit right in at the receiver position. However, he does have the ideal look of a “wildcat” quarterback. He was not only named the Walter Payton Award winner last season but earned 1st team All-America honors SoCon Offensive Player of the Year, and 1st team All-SoCon honors after throwing for 2,902 yards, 30 touchdowns, and rushing for 941 yards and 11 scores. This could perhaps be the toughest player of all to figure out because he is more talented than many FBS quarterbacks but his size, injury history, etc. make it tough to feel comfortable with him under center at the next level.

Tight ends in college often move to fullback or h-back at the next level due to their blocking ability or lack of size and Missouri State TE **CLAYTON HARBOR** (6030, 240, 4.75) fits that mold perfectly with his ability to lock on and sustain blocks, his lack of ideal tight end size, and the fact that he is still a very good option out of the backfield when combined with his potential to be a punishing blocker.

While his size likely won't cause personnel to consider moving him, Eastern Kentucky OT **DEREK HARDMAN** (6054, 294, 5.23) has shorter arms than the ideal tackle has in the NFL as just 31 inches. Hardman may not have a position at the next level unless he can bulk up with short arms for a tackle but lacks the bulk for guard at 6'6, 294. Regardless, Hardman is a very athletic player who was named 1st team All-OVC at left tackle last year and showed his athletic ability in high school by earning all-state honors the 100m hurdles.

Seems like there are too many undersized defensive ends who are a pain to project at linebacker? It happens all the time where a player, especially at a small school, is projected to stand up and play linebacker because he is too small. Many times it is a waste of time because the player is too stiff but Central Arkansas DE **LARRY HART** (6002, 239, 4.56) is a player worth taking a peak at. While some feel he might lack the athletic ability to play linebacker and the size for defensive end his motor, explosiveness, and quickness make him worth the discussion. Hart earned 1st team All-America, 1st team All-Southland, and was named finalist for the Buck Buchanan Award as a junior with 43 tackles, 21 tackles for loss, and 15 sacks after transferring from Holmes CC. He was a two-time Mississippi JC all-state selection at Holmes where he recorded 56 tackles, 11 for loss, and was named the team MVP.

Many media outlets have pegged Elon WR **TERRELL HUDGINS** (6014, 229, 4.75) since his freshman season but Hudgins could face a tweener label that he can't overcome at the next level. With his 4.7 speed it is likely that he might move inside to tight end but lacks the size for the position. His best position could be fullback but his blocking is not ideal. Hudgins must show he can block consistently or improve his speed to stay at receiver. The main reason Hudgins is worth debating over is his production which is nothing short of spectacular as a three-time All-American and three-time 1st team All-SoCon performer. Hudgins hauled in 86 passes for 1,116 yards, and 10 touchdowns as a junior in somewhat of a down year after snagging 11 balls for 1,474 yards, and 18 touchdowns in his sophomore campaign.

It is not often that a college moves a player from his original position to his likely pro position while in school but Delaware is doing that with defensive end **MATT MARCORELLE** (6015, 239, 4.70) who is moving to outside linebacker this season. He earned honorable mention All-America honors and 3rd team All-CAA with 14 tackles for loss and eight sacks in '07 coming off a year where he injured his shoulder and redshirted in 2006. He followed that up with a solid season in 2008 where he posted 32 tackles, 4.5 tackles for loss, and 3 sacks, to earn 2nd team All-CAA honors. Marcorelle is very athletic shown by his basketball skills in high school and lacks the size for an every down defensive end in most schemes thus making this move very good as scouts won't have to project as much for the next level being able to see him weekly at the position.

One position in college that often times does not see a position switch because there are very few big enough to move inside to tight end who possess the body, hands, and blocking to perform well is wide receiver but there could be an ideal position switch in this year's class. Colgate WR **PAT SIMONDS** (6053, 222, 4.58) could easily bulk up 20 pounds and play at 6'5", 245-250 as a tight end at the next level. Simonds is strong, uses his body well, however, his blocking will need improvement to make the switch. He is a project regardless of where he plays but his production with 65 grabs for 1,136 yards and nine touchdowns combined with his size/speed combo makes him an intriguing prospect. One thing to note about his speed is that on tape he appears to be more like a 4.65 guy than a 4.5 type player.

While many will scoff at the idea that a Division III wide receiver with 4.7 speed is even worth a look, it is likely they haven't seen Kenyon College WR **HARRY VON KANN** (6033, 222, 4.71). Kann lacks the ideal speed for receiver but his blocking ability, aggressive style of play, and size could make him an ideal h-back or fullback prospect at the next level. He also contributes on special teams as a kick and punt returner for the Division III program. Kann finished with 847 yards on 64 catches and 10 touchdowns to earn 1st team All-NCAC honors and return 29 kicks for 678 yards and two scores while returning seven punts for 23 yards as a junior.