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Recent surprise Ohio State commit David Durham and his mother were kind enough to spend a few minutes with The Cleveland Fan's own Mike Furlan to discuss David's recent commitment to the Buckeyes and the game that David will bring with him to Columbus in 2010. Furlan outlines that conversation with us in his latest column.



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David Durham's commitment was a surprise to just about every Buckeye fan; even the most ardent Ohio State fans had not heard of him prior to his commitment. Durham's recruiting had recently just recently picked up, receiving early offers to Virginia, West Virginia, and Illinois while also receiving increased national interest from schools in the ACC and SEC as well as Wisconsin.

The offer from Ohio State was not a total surprise to Durham and his family. David said, "While we were in Ohio Coach Fickell told my Dad that he was 90% sure that Ohio State was going to offer, but they had to wait until Monday's staff meeting to be sure." The weekend was a bit tense for Durham, a North Carolina transplant, who already had offers from two of his dream schools. "I was really happy to have offers from West Virginia and Virginia, and I think that North Carolina was close to offering, but I really liked Ohio State. I thought about it and prayed about it all weekend."

After a long weekend Durham's prayers were answered. "Coach Fickell told me to call him Monday morning, since I am a junior they cannot call me, and when I did he offered and I immediately accepted. I think it took him by surprise, but he was happy."

"I think it was a two way street, I liked their [Ohio State's] program, and they really seemed to like my skill set," offered Durham. Durham had made two previous visits to Ohio State and had the opportunity to tour the WHAC and Ohio Stadium both made lasting impressions.

"While I was in Ohio I got a chance to go to the stadium and get down on the field and go all the way to the top. I cannot wait to get out there on the field and play. The [WHAC] was awesome, the facilities cannot be beat," said Durham. One section of the WHAC in particular caught Durham's attention, "They have a display in there dedicated to the Ohio State/Michigan rivalry. I have not followed Ohio State my whole life, but I want to learn more about the greatest rivalry in college sports."

While the facilities and recent success are nice they were not the ultimate clinching factors for Durham in deciding to come to Ohio State, "I chose to come to Ohio State based on relationships with the coaches. Coach Tressel is a great guy, the kind of guy that you really want to play for. I don't want people to think I am coming just because of the success. Ohio State is all about the people." That said, David is not opposed to winning, "I have been blessed to have a lot of success at every level. Hopefully, the winning will continue when I come to Ohio State."

According to Durham's mother, "Most schools want to see you in person at a camp or junior day prior to offering, but I think it was really important to David to feel like he was a school's first choice, not a fallback plan." With such an early offer, it is obvious that he was Ohio State's first choice even though he had not received the national interest that guys like Jamel Turner and JT Moore had received. One possible explanation for this was David's recent position switch.

Durham primarily played linebacker as a sophomore, but moved to defensive end this season as a junior. In an interesting twist, David's junior year tape (comprised mostly of defensive end highlights) was lost by Rivals, and he has only recently resent them his film. Ohio State is one of the few schools that has had the opportunity to see this film, as David delivered it to the coaching staff while in Ohio for a wrestling tournament in January.

David is just your run of the mill teenager, although slightly oversized at 6'3" 230lb. "I am really busy with school and athletics, I don't want to sound like one of those boring guys, but that is what I do. When me and my friends get together we like to play the NCAA football video game and have tournaments. I was never a huge Ohio State fan, but I used to always play as Ohio State; its kind of weird looking back." David added, "We like to go out to eat a lot too, especially barbecue."

While watching this year's Penn State game with his mother, a PSU alum, David and his mother both found a role model for David on this year's Ohio State team. David's mother, Dani, remarked "That #90 on the Buckeyes was great. When I saw him play, I said 'Look David he plays just like you'." The comparison was not lost on David who commented, "I really like Thad Gibson's game. I had a chance to meet him while I was up there, I really like his game."

Durham will continue to remain busy with school and athletics for the remainder of the year. David has qualified for the Texas wrestling state championships this year and plans to run track once wrestling season ends. David, who runs the 200m and 400m, reflected on his last track season, "Last year I did not get to compete much because wrestling season ran so late because of the state tournament. My career best in the 400m is OK, it is like 54 seconds." In spite of this busy schedule David is still trying to get to Ohio State's Spring Game this year, "I am going to try to go if I can get my whole family together for it, it is going to be hard, but I really want to go."

David has been fortunate enough to receive exceptional coaching at all levels. While living in Charlotte, NC, David's middle school team had former Carolina Panthers assisting. Dani Durham said, &quot;When we were living in Charlotte I went to pick up David from football practice. One of the coaches asked me which boy, and I pointed to David. The coach said, 'We need to talk, that kid is going places.'&quot; That coach was right, David has taken his football all the way to the highest heights of high school football, and will soon bring his game all the way across the country to Columbus.

**Note:** Next season David will have a new football coach at Westlake High School. Coach Allman from Permian High School in Odessa, from &quot;Friday Night Lights&quot; fame, will replace retiring long time Westlake Coach Derek Long.