

Former Buckeye Duron Carter Heads to Alabama

Written by {ga=mikeperry}

Sunday, April 03 2011 8:35 AM - Last Updated Monday, April 04 2011 8:02 AM



This is a cautionary tale, the story of what happens when a kid gets everything handed to him while growing up and how that can lead to trouble down the road. And when an overbearing, ultra-involved father is clearly calling the shots, you can pretty much throw any kind of loyalty out the window.

It is a story about second chances, the kind of second chance that perpetuates the coddling and preferred treatment of a youth. And that youth is Duron Carter.

Carter announced today that he was heading to the University of Alabama to play football for the Crimson Tide. Although he had previously gone through the recruiting process/decision making process before, Carter was again making another commitment to one of the top college football programs in the country. You have to wonder if this commitment will mean more than his last one.

There was a time, prior to the 2009 season, when Carter was the talk of Columbus, Ohio. After an impressive training camp where Carter showed flashes of his old man, Ohio State and NFL great Cris Carter, with soft hands, deceptive speed and the ability to find the cracks in the defense, the true freshman from St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. was expected to make an immediate contribution to the highly-ranked Buckeyes.

Carter made 13 catches for 176 yards and a touchdown as a freshman, and his future at Ohio State seemed extremely bright.

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However, there was one thing missing on campus in Columbus; Carter at a desk in the classroom. After a season of admittedly slacking, Carter was suspended for the Buckeyes' trip to Pasadena for the Rose Bowl against Oregon.

"This happened because I didn't manage my time as well as I should have, and I didn't spend enough time studying," Carter told Bill Greene at Scout.com after his suspension. "I hung out with friends and spent too much time goofing off instead of where I needed to be."

A quick note to all freshmen that will be starting college this fall...classes are a really important part of your collegiate experience. Hanging out in the dorms playing Madden Football is not why you are there.

Carter was eventually bounced from Ohio State, landing at Coffeyville Community College in Kansas. Now it doesn't take much of a stretch of the imagination to understand how truly pathetic Carter's academic performance, and accompanying attitude, must have been. As a legacy with a father that ranks second on Ohio State's all-time receptions list you would have to imagine the coaching staff at Ohio State tried to help Carter as much as possible to limit him, his father and, actually, the program's embarrassment.

But Carter was dismissed, and was required to prove himself if he wanted to come back to Ohio State.

"I'm a Buckeye in my blood," Carter said last season at Coffeyville. "I'm a Buckeye all the time."

After watching the Rose Bowl at home with family, Carter sent a message, through Greene at Scouts.com, to Ohio State fans:

"I just want to say how sorry I am that I let everyone down, and I promise it will never happen again," he said. "I'm back."

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Though Carter claimed he was back, and that "Buckeye blood" pumped through his veins, apparently Ohio State did not want him back. And that's quite telling.

So Carter looked around and decided to pay a visit to Nick Saban at the University of Alabama. He ended up deciding to join the Crimson Tide and will enroll in June to be eligible in the Fall.

"I want to win a national championship," Carter said about his decision to head to Alabama. "I believe in what Coach Saban and the players are doing. This is a great program."

I guess this could be viewed as a kind of back-handed slap at Jim Tressel and Ohio State if you choose to view it that way. But then again, Carter's past has proven that the words that come out of his mouth do not mean very much.

Looking at Carter's past it's fairly simple to see why things ended up this way. He grew up the son of an NFL player in a beautiful oceanfront town. He went to a private high school, where his academic ability was praised (I wonder how that happened) and his team was among the top football powers in the nation. His father was seemingly his shadow, taking every opportunity to talk up his son. So Carter's world view came as a fortunate son of an NFL player, one of the best receivers in the history of the game, in who's footsteps he was clearly following. But things didn't work out as planned, and he had no one to blame but himself. Yes, his father should probably learn to let go, but as an adult Duron Carter is the person responsible for his shredded image at Ohio State, and the need for the second chance at Alabama where, I would imagine, the academic standards will not be quite as challenging.

Cris Carter's comment to ESPN's Joe Schad, about his son's decision, says a lot.

"We just met with Coach Saban and he's committed," he said. "It's a combination of the coaching and the structure and for Duron's maturity. All of these things make it a good match."

The "coaching and the structure for Duron's maturity?" What the heck does that mean? Is Cris Carter depending on Saban and Alabama Football to make sure his son grows up? I guess father and son forgot to ask about Ohio State's offerings as far as child rearing is concerned

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when he made one of his official visits to Columbus. Here is a hint, Cris: Your son is over 20 years old. If he still needs structured help with his maturity, maybe a college football program like Alabama is not the best thing for him at this point. You might want to consider another year at Community College, where the lights are not quite as bright and his focus on maturity can be primary.

I wish Duron Carter luck and can't imagine it has been very fun to be him over the last couple of years. He obviously had a lot of growing up to do when he landed on campus at Ohio State, and could not handle his basic academic tasks. Now, as he heads to another top-flight football program...one that has lost all-world receivers Julio Jones and Javier Arenas over the last two seasons...he will be under pressure to not only produce immediately, but to do so while proving himself in the classroom as well. All while "maturing" in the "structure" Saban's program supposedly provides. I just hope he can work that "Buckeye blood" out of his system.

Does anyone else sense an impending disaster on the horizon?