

1997 Freshmen Class

INCOMING ANALYSIS AND RATING -- 3.8* **Average Class**

This class was Coach Mike Dubose's first group of signees and the national media and recruiting services rated it a group worthy of top 20 recognition in their signing day rankings of classes. It was a class that started out with several big commitments but lost several key prospects at the end. My rating system gives the class only an "average" grade of 3.8 *. I have rated several kids lower than recruiting services because I believe several were part of "package deals" where we got the highly rated prospect and we took some teammates who are rated too high by recruiting services. It's just my feeling after seeing most all the class in person on their official visits. Still the class had a very good group of big-time prospects.

The new staff went after the best in the Southeast and got their share and also secured the majority of top talent in-state. Their efforts were successful as this class was crucial after two small classes. With an incoming rating of 3.8 * Average ...13 of 24 signees (54%) rated a "4" plus. That's only average as 75% is a good number for '4" plus signees for a class. Two signees did not qualify. TE Marlon Davis and DE Larry Paul didn't make the necessary grades to qualify. One signee was outstanding JC WR Quincy Jackson. He is a JC All-American and should contribute immediately. Two prospects BAMA lost at the end they wanted were both signed by Ole Miss. QB Romaro Miller and OL Terrance Metcalf went with the Rebels as rumors swirled about their recruitment to sway them to Oxford.

I gave 8 signees a "5" rating and they are the big-time incoming prospects of this class. Late signee DT Kenny Smith from MS chose the TIDE after a much publicized decision process which had him, his mother, and father wanting him to go to different schools. He is an outstanding DL prospect and one of the top prospects in MS. Another outstanding DL signee arrives on campus with two teammates from a Boles High School team in Jacksonville, FL that was one of the nations top teams and loaded with Div.#1 Prospects. DL Sam Mathews is one of Florida's top three prospects and a high school All-American. LB Travis Carroll is my favorite signee in this class. After seeing him in person and reading his high school stats he really looks to be imposing at middle linebacker. High intensity is his key trait. He is one of the top LB's in America and was recruited by most of America's top schools. Also signed from Boles High School and a teammate of Mathews and Carroll, was DB Chris Reier. He is an outstanding baseball player and will make the move to DB from QB at BAMA. He is very small in size. Also small in size but rated a "5" with outstanding speed is DB Kecal Bailey from Tuscaloosa. Reier and Bailey are smaller than listed and give BAMA two more small DB's when they need more size at CB.

Other “5” rated signees from Alabama are two RB’s Adam Cox from Jasper and Antoneyo Williams from Tuscaloosa. Williams was the state’s number one prospect and Mr. Football. Cox is a great athlete and could play on either side of the ball. The other “5” rated signee is safety Tony Dixon from Pickens County. He is one of the top safety prospects in the South and a great athlete. WR Quincy Jackson who was mentioned above is the other “5” rated signee.

Other signees of notice were QB Andrew Zow from FL. This high school legend led his team to 3 straight state championships and a long winning streak. He injured his knee his senior year and his rating dropped due to the knee injury. Auburn had his commitment as a LB but when BAMA loss QB Romaro Miller to Ole Miss, BAMA offered Zow a shot at QB and he dropped his commitment to AUB and signed with BAMA. RB Shaun Bohannon and WR Jason McAddley were from Oak Ridge, TN. They were shunned by nearby TN and BAMA signed both. BAMA also feels they stole a big OL from FL STATE who had him on hold for a scholarship but signed with BAMA when offered. Big William Cuthbert could be an outstanding player some day.

My rating system rated this class as “average” incoming due to numerous “3” rated signees and even a couple of “2” rated kids. The class has 6-8 DB’s and several do not have outstanding speed and the one’s with speed are very small. Coach Dubose first class is solid but several are questionable and the class needs for all to contribute after the past two years of reduced scholarships. The Coach Mike Dubose era is underway.

OUTGOING ANALYSIS AND RATING – 2.3 * Poor

Coach Mike Dubose’s first recruiting class arrived with high optimism and a chance to contribute early. The depth of BAMA’s roster was thin and several players needed to play early. The class was very crucial to BAMA and Coach Dubose for several reasons. One being it needed to be a class that all the signees made it in school and stay with the program their entire 4-5 years and provide a solid career. After two very small classes due to NCAA sanctions, this was the first class to start restocking the depleted numbers and thin depth created by those sanctions. Unfortunately 5 years later, we find few signees contributed early or late during their career and worst of all 15 of 26 signees did not finish their career. Two signees didn’t qualify and 13 left early for various reasons. My ratings do not include the two non-qualifiers TE Marlon Davis and DT Larry Paul. Only 9 signees contributed full careers with four of those 5th-year seniors who just completed their final year of eligibility with the recent 2001 season.

The class arrived in T-Town with an incoming rating of 3.8 which was only “average” on my rating system. Their outgoing rating is far from where I would have ever dreamed with the group looking very good on signing day. Their outgoing rating is the lowest since I started in 1980. The 2.3 outgoing rating is the lowest now replacing Coach Ray Perkins 1984 class (2.4 *Poor) at the bottom. You would ideally like for about 60% of your signees to contribute a full career and contribute a “3” plus rating in my system which is a career contribution of being a “part-time starter or make the 2-deep depth chart” in your 4-5 years. This class had 9 of 24 (38%) contributed a “3” plus career. Very Poor! Early departures kill a class rating with my system and this class had 13 leave early for “1” rating. This class had eight “5” rated incoming signees. A good number of high-profile prospects in a class. Five years later only 1 of those produced the same outstanding outgoing rating. DT Kenny Smith completed a solid career and was a two-time All-SEC performer. He gets a “6” rating which I give All-Americans and multi-year All-SEC players.

Andrew Zow just completed one of the most unique BAMA careers I’ve followed since I started in 1980. He was one of the most classy and dedicated young men to wear Crimson. Several times during trying times in his career he could have used the “race card” with the help of some media personalities and papers to create some difficult situations in our program. I never felt those circumstances took place and he never used that damaging and ugly scenario that many BAMA bashers constantly tried to exploit. He showed total class and team commitment his entire career. He was consistently a great practice performer and only lacked that same consistency on Saturdays from being an All-Star player. He rewrote many passing records and led BAMA to victory in two of BAMA’s biggest wins in recent years. The win at “the swamp” in Florida in 1999 and the recent win on “the plains” at Auburn this past 2001 season will be games in BAMA’s series of greatest games. He came in as a “3” rated prospect and left a “5” rated player and became the 15th player since I started my ratings to go from a “3” to “5” during his career. A one-time Auburn linebacker commitment whom changed to BAMA on signing day for a chance to play QB, which he played in high school, Zow contributed as a true Freshman at BAMA.

WR Jason McAddley and SS Tony Dixon had solid careers and produced “4” rated careers. Also producing a “4” rated career was JC WR Quincy Jackson who contributed a solid career and provided what you want from JC signees immediate help and a significant contribution with solid playing time. Other “4” rated careers were supplied by OL William Cuthbert who started most of his career and was a solid player and TE Shawn Draper who most feel would have been an All-Star if he had found and accepted the OT position as home instead of TE earlier in his career.

The much publicized trio of prospects from Bolles High in Jacksonville, FL who signed and were given enormous expectations to fill by fans and media all left the program early. LB Travis Carroll played early and a controversial injury along with inconsistent play put him under the microscope immediately. He left for Florida and his name still remains active with BAMA fans today due to possibly receiving an “automobile” which came out in the recent NCAA investigation. DL Sam Mathews was one of the top players in Florida and a big-time prospect coming in. He was never comfortable at BAMA and injuries finally took him back home. I saw DB Chris Reier on his visit and he didn’t impress me. He never contributed significantly and he finally left to concentrate on baseball at home in Florida.

After two small recruiting classes in 1995 and 1996 due to NCAA sanctions, this class was “crucial” in the rebuilding of BAMA’s depleted roster and depth. Coach Mike Dubose’s first class was far from what the program needed and all the key items you wanted this class to contribute, fell well short of those desires. The seniors and “5” year seniors were the upperclassmen on a 3-8 2000 team and a 7-5 2001 squad. Only 9 of 26 original signees contributed any significant playing time and instead of rebuilding the programs depleted numbers, this class didn’t help the problem with 15 of 26 signees never finishing their careers. This class is an example how you cannot look at the signing day list of blue-chip prospects and automatically assume they will help the program. This class had several players who were big-time high school stars and won state championships. Their lack of success at BAMA is truly surprising.

Class list on following page

1997 Class - Coach Mike Dubose						
Name	Pos.	ST.	Incoming Rating	Outgoing Rating	Honors	NFL
Kecalf Bailey	DB	AL	5	4		
Michael Barfield	OL	AL	4	2		
Shaun Bohannon	RB	TN	4	1		
Travis Carroll	LB	FL	5	1		
Adam Cox	FB	AL	5	3		
William Cuthbert	OL	FL	4	4		
A.J. Diaz	K	FL	3	1		
Tony Dixon	FS	AL	5	4		*
Shawn Draper	TE	AL	3	4		*
John Fielding	SS	GA	2	1		
Chris Horne	SS	GA	3	1		
Quincy Jackson JC	WR	MS	5	4		
Sam Matthews	DT	FL	5	1		
Jason McAddley	WR	TN	3	4		
Carlton Person	LB	AL	3	1		
Chris Reier	DB	FL	3	1		
Kenny Smith	DT	MS	5	6	SEC (2)	*
Santana Stennis	DT	MS	2	1		
Wayne Thomas	DB	AL	3	1		
Chris Wheeler	LB	AL	4	1		
Antoneyo Williams	RB	AL	5	1		
Shaun Williams	DT	GA	3	2		
Joe Yount	DT	AL	4	1		
Andrew Zow	QB	FL	3	5		
Non Quailifers						
Marlon Davis	TE	GA				
Larry Paul	DL	AL				
Overall			3.8	2.3	SEC 1	3

Incoming Class Rating System

3.6 – Less.....Poor

3.7 – 3.9.....Average

4.0 – 4.1Good

4.2 – Above.....Excellent

