

1999 Freshmen Class

INCOMING ANALYSIS AND RATING – 4.6 *Excellent

For the second straight year Coach Mike Dubose faced the recruiting task of trying to sign a deep and full class of talented prospects to go with the excellent class of 1998 and continue to restore the talent level to BAMA standards. Due to the harsh sanctions of reduced scholarships in 1995 and 1996 and then a 1997 class which has already had several leave the program, the BAMA roster is heavy with lower classmen and thus an abundance of youth and inexperience. This 1999 class was again crucial to building depth down the road and it looks like Coach Mike Dubose and staff have accomplished this with a class of highly rated signees and considered a top five class nationally and the top recruiting class in the SEC. The 1998 class produced a large number of first year contributors and this 1999 class is expected to better that. The negative is 10 signees, one third of the entire class, didn't qualify. Thus the full number of 25 possible signees fell short. The quality of the 21 signees that did make it in should push for playing time and create an even stronger level of competition among the positions on the football team.

A very large number of those "much publicized" "5" rated blue-chip prospects, that the top schools battle for each year, found their way to T-Town and helped push this class incoming rating to an all-time high since I started in 1980. A total of 31 kids signed and 20 were "5" rated prospects. In the end though, only 21 signees made the grades needed to qualify and those will be the members of my 1999 class. I have not included non-qualifiers in my class ratings in the past and will not this year. They destroy a class rating plus many times they are signed with the staff knowing they probably won't qualify but give the kid the opportunity to enjoy the signing day experience and many will be placed in junior college and hope to be resigned in two years.

My best guess on what each of the non-qualifiers plan to do is most will sit out and continue to take the test to qualify and resign next year. Three of the N/Q signees were highly rated and possible early contributors. DE David Paine and TE Michael Gaines will probably sit out and retake the test. Paine may still join LB Dave Peterson and go the JC route and get things in order and resign in two years. Others N/Q signees were highly touted WR's Dre Fulgham and Derrick Woods who both look to be headed for sitting out a year and retaking the test. Three DL signees were Robert Branch, Garry McNealy, and Gerald Clark. All look to be candidates for sitting out and retaking test. DB Raymond Hudson looks to sit out and LB Terris Martin is questionable after a small personal situation happened.

The remaining 21 signees are qualified and ready to contribute. History shows that if you can sign 7-10 of the "5" rated prospects, that all the powers pursue, you probably will have a very good incoming class and you held your own in the recruiting war zone. This class is a phenomenal group with 15 qualified prospects who were "5" rated. Again, this class is now the highest rated incoming class since I started in 1980. This 1999 class with

15 and the 1998 class with 13, gives BAMA 28 "5" rated prospects in back to back classes. If the majority of these highly touted prospects remain at BAMA for their full eligibility we could have a real solid group of upperclassmen in 2002 and 2003. My numbers show since 1980 that 40% of "5" rated signees go on to be All-SEC or All-American in their careers. We will see if these two classes produce a championship or special moment in BAMA history.

It seems each position got help from this group. On the offensive side of the ball the skill positions got more depth with QB Josh Parker from FL. RB Santonio Beard is a great prospect who came to BAMA from TN after an intense recruiting battle. He stood firm with his commitment to BAMA. Also, RB Brandon Miree from OH is from the same area in Kentucky as current BAMA star Shaun Alexander. He arrives with big back size and speed also. WR Antonio Carter from FL is a big time prospect and when you add him with last year's WR signee's Freddie Milons, Eric Locke and Sam Collins you have an impressive group of receivers for the future. The offensive line got a boost in talent and size with Dante Ellington and Dennis Alexander. Both are around the 6'-6" 330 pound mark and huge. A lot of work will be required from these two but their potential is unlimited. Alonzo Ephraim is a model of what a center should look like. At 6'-3" 280 pounds he looks like a Bull with powerful legs to go with huge a upper body. He is an impressive prospect. TE Casey Gilbert is a highly rated prospect that was not impressive on his visit to T-Town to me. He will have to work hard in the weight room and still may grow into a OL.

On the defensive side BAMA also added help at every position. DB's Gerald Dixon and Hirschel Bolden are both great athletes and should contribute early. For immediate help, JC CB Milo Lewis was signed. A JC all-star and big time prospect, he could start immediately at BAMA. Only one LB qualified but he is special. Saleem Rasheed is highly touted and could be a possible BAMA great if he lives up to his expectations. Another signee who was very impressive on his visit and listed as a fullback is Jeremy Walker. I feel he will end up at LB and could be outstanding. The DL gets two big time prospects in Jarret Johnson and Kenny King. Both will need to get bigger but have great potential. DE Leslie Williams from GA was secured at the end after Georgia Tech backed off due to academic requirements at their school. He can play many positions and looks to be headed for DE.

This class is loaded with high profile prospects and another banner class for CRC's resume. This class has loads of potential and most of these "5" rated signees were recruited by the powers in the nation. It's a banner class that could have been even more heralded if the five "5" rated N/Q's had made it in. These 1998 and 1999 classes are now saddled with unheard of expectations but these kids were high school stars and have already been faced tough media and fan exposure. They sure have the BAMA faithful on a high and excited about the future. Time will tell if they leave their legacy at BAMA but the quality of these two classes was a must for Coach Mike Dubose. Now if his staff can add the required coaching to go along with the talent, the return to the top could be sooner than expected. The 2002 and 2003 seasons will be very interesting .
Class list on following page.....

1999 Class - Coach Mike Dubose						
Name	Pos.	St.	Incoming Rating	Outgoing Rating	Honors	NFL
Dennis Alexander	OL	TN	4			
Santonio Beard	PREP RB	TN	5			
Hirchel Bolden	DB	AL	5			
Antonio Carter	WR	FL	5			
Gerald Dixon	DB	MY	5			
Dante Ellington	OL	AL	5			
Alonzo Ephraim	C	AL	4			
Casey Gilbert	TE	MS	5			
Brandon Greer	WR	AL	3			
Tyler Harris	DB	TN	3			
Jarret Johnson	DL	FL	5			
Charles Jones	DB	GA	4			
Kenny King	DE	AL	5			
Milo Lewis	JC DB	CA	5			
Matt Lomax	OL	AL	5			
Roberto McBride	WR	FL	4			
Brandon Miree	RB	OH	5			
Josh Parker	QB	FL	5			
Saleem Rasheed	LB	AL	5			
Jeremy Waker	FB	AL	5			
Leslie Williams	DE	GA	5			
Non-Qualifiers / Problems						
Robert Branch	DL	AL				
Gerard Clark	DL	FL				
Dre Fulgham	WR	AL				
Michael Gaines	TE	FL				
Raymond Hudson	DB	FL				
Garry McNealy	DL	FL				
David Paine	DE	TN				
Dave Peterson	LB	FL				
Derrick Woods	WR	TN				
Terris Martin	LB	AL				
Overall			4.6			

Incoming Class rating system

- 3.6 – Less.....Poor
- 3.7 – 3.9..... Average
- 4.0 – 4.1..... Good
- 4.2 - Above....Excellent

