Fans that religously follow the Ohio State football program, even in the February doldroms when the first snap seems years away, were dealt a shock this week when the Buckeyes received their fourth commit of the 2010 class. Austin Westlake (TX) LB/DE David Durham committed immediately after receiving an offer from the Buckeyes coaching staff following an east coast recruiting trip to West Virginia, Virginia, and Ohio State, shocking a lot of recruitniks in Ohio who had no idea who David was. Westlake's head football coach, Derek Long, was kind enough to discuss David and his recruitment with our Mike Furlan today.

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Coach Long said, "David had been in Ohio for a wrestling tournament, and had pretty consistent contact with the Ohio State staff since," but Durham's commitment to Ohio State was still a surprise to Long. "I saw David yesterday [Monday] morning and David said that he had offers from West Virginia, Virginia, and Illinois, but still had not heard from Ohio State."

Long added "He [David] had been most impressed with Ohio State, and David wanted to wait to see what Ohio State was going to do. I didn't even know that he was going up there on that visit." Durham committed within hours of that conversation. "I wouldn't be surprised if he committed before the sentence [offering him] was complete."

So what can we as Ohio State fans expect from David? Not surprisingly Coach Long had some very complimentary words for David. Long has been on the job for the highly successful Westlake program for a long time and has seen a lot of high quality players come through his doors (Drew Brees ring a bell?) and says that David ranks right up there with the best of them.

"David has the kind of intensity that cannot be coached. He has a motor that we sometimes have to rein in during practice. This team is set up for senior oriented leadership, so it was a bit surprising when David won the team voted on spirit award this year as a junior. I am not sure what is said during huddles in games, it is not going to be the same as in practice, but David must be showing something out there in the huddle or on the field that is obviously getting the respect of his teammates," he said.

Long continued, " One of the things that you hear about Texas kids is that when they get to college they know how to work. David will bring that to Ohio State, players who work like he does are contagious and cause their teammates to work harder."

On the field David looks to be a Leo LB/DE hybrid cut from the same cloth as Vernon Gholston, Keith Wells, and Nathan Williams. At 6'3" 225, with the frame to carry another 30lbs, Durham has the size to put his hand down, but also has the speed and athleticism to drop back and play some linebacker.

Not surprisingly Durham filled both roles for Westlake. Last year David started the season at LB but was forced to play tackle during the season due to depth issues. "David played linebacker and tackle last year and had outside containment responsibilities on the quarterback option, but since we run a lot of slants he had to go up against a lot of big guys in A gap, " said Long.

Westlake is one of Texas most consistent programs. The Chaps have made the state playoffs in Texas' largest division for the last 22 consecutive seasons, winning one state championship

and finishing as runners up 5 times. Westlake finished last season 9-5 with a loss in the state quarterfinals. Durham registered 11 sacks and 84 tackles while splitting time as a linebacker and on the defensive line.

It is interesting to note that Ohio State's 2010 recruiting class will be relatively small, 16-18 players, yet the Buckeyes chose to extend this early offer to a relatively unheralded kid who plays in the shadow of Darrell K. Royal Stadium in Austin. The staff must see something in this kid that the recruiting services have not noticed yet. It would not be the first time (Troy Smith, AJ Hawk, Malcolm Jenkins, etc.) and it certainly wouldn't be the last.