I caught up with David Durham a couple of days ago, and it was not easy. After several successful seasons at Westlake High in Austin, TX, the 2010 Ohio State recruit moved back home to North Carolina. We discussed a wide range of topics from his move, to his projected playing position and offseason training. Heck, we even debated the merits of Texas BBQ vs. North Carolina BBQ, I was even able to get David to take a position on this controversial topic. David not only made a significant move from North Carolina to Texas, but also made a significant transition on the field. Durham had spent the better part of his time in Texas playing on the defensive line, but this year he moved to linebacker.

“Last season I played more linebacker. I moved to that position in the middle of the year. The Ohio State coaches were thinking about playing me at the SAM (strongside linebacker) spot,

but it is looking more like I'll be starting out at the MIKE (middle linebacker) position." Durham continued, "The coaches really like my ability to rush the passer. I need to keep working on coverage skills and picking up the middle game. My coaches were really helping me to make reads on the linemen and backs."

This fall will be Durham's first fall in Columbus, but he is still not sure what to expect, "The coaches at Ohio State have been pretty tight lipped about fall practice. They are keeping me in the dark and forcing me to focus on preparing in the present," advice he is obviously taking to heart.

"I have made very significant strength gains, and I am still 6'3" 230lbs. I am working on getting stronger and really focusing on my speed and quickness. My diet has been really clean, I am taking it very seriously, taking no days off. I get paranoid, after it is all done I don't want to say I wish I would've done this or done that. I am taking it way more serious, and I am really focusing on the recovery aspect too."

Not content to do it all on his own, Durham has enlisted the help of top professional trainer Joe DeFranco. "I am training all the time. I am going to New Jersey in a couple of weeks to train with Joe DeFranco."

No interview with David Durham would be complete without revisiting his strange recruitment which saw him go from "not on the OSU RADAR" to committed in a span of days.

"While I was going through the process a lot of people were like 'Go where you would go if you weren't playing football,' but that really doesn't make sense because I am going to play football. A lot of other coaches would call and ask who else had offered, but not Ohio State. They really didn't care about that. They wanted to see my game film and to talk to me, and then they offered right away. They wanted me to play for them because of my play, not because someone else offered."

"After I committed a couple of coaches called to see how committed I was, but I shut them down pretty early, so it wasn't that big of a deal."

Obviously David remains very committed to Ohio State, and he enjoyed his first season as a member of the Buckeye family. "Last football season was great. It was my first as part of the Ohio State family. The defense played strong all season long and was key to the success. It is going to be great to play and train with them."

The two sport star saw some pretty significant success on the mat this season as well. "My wrestling season was pretty good. I had a hamstring injury, but I still came back to state and lost in the finals on a penalty point, so I got runner up." Never one to pass up an opportunity to get better on the field, Durham has incorporated his mat skills into his linebacking. "I am a football player that wrestles, I use the wrestling to get better at football. I use the wrestling leverage and hand skills to get off blocks."

Sometimes it is hard for fans to remember that these athletes are just 17-18 year old kids; it is also hard for athletes to remember that as well, but David has taken some time out to do a few things off the field. "I am a big movie guy, *Hot Tub Time Machine* was pretty funny. It was pretty vulgar, but it was funny. I was really disappointed with
*Robin Hood*
. It was OK, but it was not as good as I expected. It was just too unrealistic. They did leave it set up for a sequel though." David continued, "My brothers are always playing Call of Duty, so I don't get to play NCAA Football that much, besides I don't really have time to watch TV or play video games. I am just trying to hang out with my friends before I go away to college."

And now for the controversy… "This might get me in trouble, but North Carolina is the capital of pork BBQ while Texas is the capital of beef BBQ. I have to say I like Texas. There is this chain of BBQ restaurants in Texas called Rudy's that has great brisket, chicken, ribs and turkey sausage."

**My thoughts**: Every time I talk to David, I cannot help but come away impressed with his work ethic and drive. He is the kind of kid who may not have the ridiculous measurables, but he has the heart to consistently improve. In short, he is the kind of player that has thrived at Ohio State; the guy with the athletic skills to succeed, but moreover the character to excel.

The OSU staff is looking to use Durham as a middle linebacker, and based on his 2010 HS game film that is certainly a possibility, but ultimately, I still David as a LEO. He has the frame to put on another 20lbs while maintaining the quickness to rush the passer. He has the active hands that will get him off an offensive tackle and the speed to get his shoulder past him on the

outside.  I think Durham is one inside move away from being a serious force on the outside.

One thing I am sure of no matter where they put him, Durham will do the work to get on the field and make a difference.  I am confident that four years from now we will be talking David Durham, one of the sleepers of the 2010 recruiting class.