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## Hokies ink 20 new recruits on National Signing Day

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by [Alex Jackson](#), sports editor

The Virginia Tech football team announced the addition of 20 student-athletes, including five prep All-Americans Wednesday.

After all was said and done on national signing day, the Hokies signed seven of the top 13 players in the state and 10 of the top 25 in Virginia, according to the Roanoke Times.

"I think it's been another very successful recruiting year," said Tech head coach Frank Beamer. "I like the talent level, the athletic ability of this class. I think we've got some guys that are versatile in a position they can play. I think academically, character-wise — it's very, very good."

The highly ranked Virginia products include Brookeville High defensive end Zack McCray, ranked No. 5 in the state by the Roanoke Times, Fork Union Military Academy offensive lineman Mark Shuman (ranked No. 7), First Colonial High outside linebacker Nick Dew (ranked No. 8), Fork Union Military Academy offensive lineman Nick Acree (ranked No. 9) and Loudoun County High linebacker Chase Williams (ranked No. 11). They all officially signed letters of intent to join the Hokies.

"These are guys that — a lot of them we saw in our one-day camp," Beamer said. "We know some things about them first hand, so I think that always helps."

McCray, Shuman, Dew, Acree and Williams all were SuperPrep All-Americans this year, while McCray and Acree also earned All-America nods from PrepStar.

"I'm particularly proud of the fact that 13 of these players came from and went to school in the state of Virginia," Beamer said. "I think that continues to be a priority with us. You know, we get our share of the better players from Virginia and I think that has happened."

In addition to the five All-Americans, eight other players who hail from the state of Virginia officially signed with Tech Wednesday.

The in-state class features five other players ranked in the Roanoke Times Top 25.

Highland Springs High defensive end Derrick Hopkins (ranked No. 12), Robinson High linebacker Brian Laiti (ranked No. 13), Midlothian High offensive lineman Matt Arkema (ranked No. 18), King's Fork High free safety Dominique Patterson (ranked No. 21) and Brooke Pointe High wide receiver E.L. Smiling (ranked No. 25) all decided on Tech as their school of choice.

Two local standouts also signed letters of intent Wednesday.

Pulaski County High linebacker Tahrick Peak, ranked No. 30 in the state by the Roanoke Times and Rockbridge County High offensive lineman Caleb Farris (ranked No. 39) signed with the Hokies as well.

"Tahrick, he can run," Beamer said. "You know, he needs to get bigger and he understands that. So, I

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think his future is in front of him, but he's got to get his body a little bit better to take advantage of that and he knows that.

"Farris — you know, he's a Virginia Tech guy," he continued. "He wants to come here and we want him to come here and I think he's athletic for a guy as big as he is. He really has good feet and that's what we're looking at — toughness and good feet and redirection, and I think Caleb fits that perfectly."

Also included among Tech's in-state signees is defensive tackle DeAntre Rhodes, who actually signed with the Hokies last February but went to Hargrave, where he is still attending school.

Rounding out Tech's 2010 recruiting class are seven players from six different states outside of Virginia and one from the District of Columbia.

"I think the guys from out of state — there's a high quality of player there," Beamer said.

The out-of-state class includes offensive lineman Laurence Gibson, who hails from Sierra Vista, Ariz., and comes to Tech after spending some time at Hargrave as well.

Rivals Recruiting ranks Gibson as the No. 2 prep school player in the country.

Also joining the Hokies is tight end Jerome Lewis from Rochester, N.Y., defensive back Kyle Fuller from Baltimore, Md., cornerback Detrick Bonner from McDonough, Ga., and defensive end Justin Taylor from Norwood, N.C.

The Hokies also added two quarterbacks from out-of-state — Ricardo Young, from Washington, D.C., and Mark Leal from Greenacres, Fla.

Young is rated the No. 21 dual-threat quarterback in the country by Rivals and was the Gatorade State Football Player of the Year for the District.

Leal is ranked the 28th best dual-threat quarterback in the nation by Rivals.

Of the 20 players in the 2010 recruiting class, 12 are projected to play on the defensive side of the ball, while eight players are projected to play offense. Five are offensive linemen.

Beamer said that while the number of offensive linemen signed may seem high, Tech followed its original plan.

"We have an overall of how many offensive lineman we'd like to have in the overall scheme, you know, and how many defensive ends we'd like to have, how many defensive tackles you'd like to have in the program, and we try to stay fairly close to that," Beamer said.

In past years, the Hokies went out-of-state often, signing highly recruited offensive linemen who never made it to the field due to struggles such as academic ineligibility or injury.

In recent years, however, they've looked more toward homegrown products.

"I think what's happened is — well, some of those misses ... caused us to continue to catch up as to the number of offensive lineman we'd like to have in our program," Beamer said.

Some familiar names highlight the 2010 recruiting class as well.

Four brothers and one cousin of current or former Hokie football players signed Wednesday, including former Hokie and current NFL safety Vincent Fuller's brother, Kyle; former Hokie Ryan Shuman's brother, Mark; current Hokie Antoine Hopkins' brother, Derrick; and current Hokie Nubian Peak's brother, Tahrick.

Also, Zack McCray is the first cousin of current Hokies' backup quarterback, Logan Thomas.

"When we get brothers coming, like Tahrick Peak, Mark Shuman, Kyle Fuller and Derrick Hopkins, and a cousin, like Zack McCray, you like the statement that it makes about your program and how you treat people," Beamer said.



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