



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

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Quotes from University of Houston Head Football Coach Kevin Sumlin Wednesday, February 6, 2007 * Houston, Texas * Athletics/Alumni Center

HEAD COACH KEVIN SUMLIN

Opening Statement:

"The main reason that I am here is because everyone is on the same page at the University, from the President to the Athletics Director, the Board of Regents and the fans. Everyone wants to win and wants to win big. There isn't any doubt in my mind and with those I have had contact with that that's what they want to do. Today is the first step with our staff in doing that."

"We targeted some people and some of them we got and some of them we didn't. We are real pleased with the guys we got for two reasons. Number one, we addressed our needs and we feel good about that. But they are also a group of guys that want to be Cougars. As I have sat and told a bunch of people it doesn't do me a whole lot of good to talk you into something you don't want to do because down the road that is going to come out. We will talk you into it but at the end of the day I hope you believe it."

On Isaiah Sweeney:

"Two weeks ago at the Carl Lewis (Track) High School Meet he ran 10.5 (seconds) and lost and he was upset. As a matter of fact his family was upset and everyone in the room was upset except for Coach Sumlin because he is fast. He is fast enough to help us. As I told him don't hang your head there aren't a whole lot of guys out there (on the field) with track spikes and spandex on. You'll put pads on and run right by them. This is a wiry, wiry guy with great hands. He is great without the ball. He is a really good route runner. He is a guy that brings speed to our program."

On Ronnie Williams:

"Ronnie Williams is a guy who may not have the same type of speed (as Sweeney) but he is more of a make-them-miss guy. He has great hands. He is a tough guy and will make you miss. He catches everything and is going to be a great addition. He can really play the ball in the air and make things happen. His forte is screen and he is a great route runner and possession guy."

On Bryce Beall:

"This guy I saw a year-ago. This year he averaged over 200 yards a game running the ball in the playoffs. He is a physical guy. He is compact and put together. He is 190 lbs. and is strong and fast. He has great speed. A lot of people recruited this guy as a safety and he is coming here to play running back."

On Chris Wilson:

"Here is a guy that is a bigger guy. He is 208 lbs. right now but he has excellent speed. He is a guy that can really run between the tackles and make people miss. We have got to make him get more people to miss than run him over. If he gets to be 220 lbs. he will be all right. He has great hands and is a great kid. He was committed first to Central Florida."

On Jacolby Ashworth:

"He is a guy that we really liked on tape and then we went and watched him play basketball. He is about 6'4" and 275 lbs. and he signed early. He has excellent feet, extremely athletic and has left tackle written all over him. We went and watch him play basketball and he was running up and down the court and we said we will take him."

On Blake Sargent:

"Blake Sargent is a guy from right down the road in Friendswood. This is a big athletic guy, 280 lbs. on his visit and strong. This guy is physical and the way he plays has a chance to play early. He had a million shotgun snaps to a quarterback and he is a guy that we really like. Centers are hard to find, especially ones that can snap it out of the shotgun."

On Ari Tatum:

“Ari Tatum is a guy that was committed and we wanted to keep. This guy is extremely athletic. I’m not so sure he can’t play defense. He’s 6’5”, he was 253 lbs. on his visit. He can run, and he’s got great punch when he gets there. I think if a guy can catch, he can be a pretty good tight end, but if not, he can play defensive end. At the least, he can be a tackle, because if he’s 253 lbs. right now he needs to be 280 pounds. He has a whole lot of upside to him and that’s what we’re looking for on the offensive line right now.”

On Ken Van Heule:

“We got three kids from the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Ken Van Heule being one of them. All of the guys have the same thing in common. We’re going to go out and instead of recruiting the biggest guys that we can find, which we would like to do, all of these guys are high-motored guys that can run. We are really fortunate right now, with where our offensive line is, to be able to recruit a class of four guys that are athletic, that are 265-270 pounds, with the exception of Blake Sargent, and that are going to grow into big guys that can still run. This guy can run, and he’s mean too when he gets there, which is also very nice.”

On Doran Guillory:

“Doran Guillory is a kid from Beaumont (Texas) and he has an interesting story. He is a strong guy; a 250 lb. guy. He played a couple years and this is what we’re looking for right here at 255 lbs. on his visit. A 6’3 guy; he was committed to Iowa State, and it took us a couple weeks to get him to see the light, and he is coming here. And I don’t know who was happier on Sunday morning, his mother who told him to call and tell me he was coming, or him. She made him tell me he’s coming. And a whole lot of that is going to be happening around here pretty soon.”

On David Hunter:

“David Hunter is the same as Doran Guillory. I think his dad was happier than he was (about coming to Houston). We went out there to recruit some guys that were big. We needed some bigger guys in there, and I’ll be honest with you this guy’s got one of the biggest backsides I’ve ever seen on a human being, especially for an 18 year old. He is 299 pounds and 300 when he was here. He can move; he’s fast. I mean, just extremely explosive.”

On Mohammed Usman:

“Mohammed Usman is another guy from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. This guy is fast and quick as a cat. He is one of the top wrestlers in the state. He lost one match. He lost to a guy that was 285 pounds. The next time he wrestled him, I said, ‘How did you win?’ He said, ‘I had to neutralize the guy, so I head-butted him and he was blinded by his blood.’ I looked at Coach Burnett and said ‘You’ve got to get this guy. I like this guy already.’ He’s relentless, he’s fast, and he’s mean when he gets there, so we’re looking for big things from him.”

On Anthony Lewis and Marcus McGraw:

“Anthony Lewis was a highly recruited kid from here in town by a lot of Big 10 schools and a lot of Big 12 schools. He is a guy that can run fast and in three weeks, the line-backers that we’ve signed, the three guys, maybe four, depending on how Mohammed plays, Marcus McGraw, Anthony and Jarvis, it’s a recruiting year. Every year we’d take these guys because they’re fast and they are mean. They love to hit. And they’re a lot faster than people think they are, and they know what to do when they get there. He’s another big time wrestler. He was ranked number one in the state in his category, and those guys as you know, they don’t like to mess with people very long.”

On Jarvis Smith:

“Jarvis Smith is a guy with exceptional speed for a guy that is as long as he is. This guy is 200 plus pounds and he can really run. He’s going to be a 235 to 245 pound guy. He can fly and track down people and even if he makes mistakes, he can come up and cover up those mistakes.”

On Gino Collins:

“Here’s a guy that on tape plays a lot of different positions. I like him for two reasons. Number one, he was on a state championship team and was a starter for two years in a row. Number two, he can play either defensive back or wide receiver. He does things with the back and also comes up and hits people. He is an exceptional special teams guy. He is one of those athletic guys that can come to the middle of the field and hit somebody.”

On Jackie Hinton Jr.:

“Jackie Hinton is a one of those players in your recruiting class that you like. I started talking to him right after I got the job here. He was a guy that I knew about. We were right on the verge of us recruiting him at Oklahoma. This guy carried the ball 30 plus times a game, caught passes and he really hits people. At the time he was committed to Oklahoma State. He’s another one of the guys that when he told me he was coming I didn’t know who was happier, him or his dad? His dad is extremely happy, so happy in fact that he called me everyday until signing day asking whom else is coming. But that’s all right. This guy here is a young player that might have a chance to come help us. He’s such a physical guy and a return guy that can do a lot of things for us.”

On Kris Johnston:

“He was committed early but did not play at all his senior year. He had an injury that didn’t allow him to play. We felt, as a staff, that it was important to honor his scholarship. Here’s a local guy that was committed from day one. It did bring up the age-old question, when coaches change are u committed to the university or are you committed to the coach? Recruiting is a two-way street and he was committed to the University of Houston and we decided to honor that.”

On Nick Saenz:

“I expect good things out Nick Saenz. I wish he was a little bit bigger but he plays fast and he will hit you. He’s a corner or safety guy but will probably play corner here. He is a really fast guy but needs to gain a little bit more weight. He can run with anybody and make plays on the ball. He does those things that you just can’t teach. He has great feet and is not afraid to stick his face in on somebody and can really help us down the road, if not earlier. He came from a great program down there in Pearland, Texas.”

On Jordan Mannisto:

“This is a guy that no one knows about. He’s from California. He’s one of the top 10 kickers in the country. He kicks off from the 40 and you’re back five yards but his ball is deep and out. He’s a punter. He can do both (kickoffs and returns). He’ll come in and compete right away. I believe competition is a friend of ours.”

Closing Statements:

“We’re really excited about this class and like I said you have to take everything with a grain of salt. Two or three years from now who knows, know matter what you’re rated or where the class is going to be ranked I believe you’re always going to be judged by what happens a couple years down the road. Sometimes people rank it by freshmen playing. When we get down the road two or three years from now that’s how we’re going to judge this class. Right now, we addressed the needs that we thought we needed to address and in three weeks we couldn’t be happier with the guys we have coming to the University of Houston.”