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Georgia Announces the Signing of 19 Recruits by UGA Sports Communications

ATHENS-- Georgia head football coach Mark Richt and assistant head coach/recruiting coordinator Rodney Garner addressed the media Wednesday on National Signing Day. They offered the following comments:

Head Coach Mark Richt:

Opening Statement...

"I'm just going to echo some of the things Rodney (Garner) already said. An awful lot of work did go into this class, and it takes a lot of great people. I think a lot of media will talk about the position coaches, the assistant coaches and the head coaches that are doing the recruiting, but there is so much more to it with our recruiting staff in general – all of our secretaries, all the student help we have and we have professors all over this campus who have taken their time, either on game days or official visit weekends. Our academic people have been on board with us. Anytime a young man throughout the summer wants to come in, whether it's during the week or on a Saturday or Sunday, someone from our academic staff is ready to standby and come in and talk about the University of Georgia - the university that we all love. There are so many people that have helped us, and I'm just so thankful for that.

"We also have a very handsome young man over here, Jakar Hamilton, and his family is right here too. It's just wonderful to have him here. He'll be available for any comments too. He's one of two mid-year enrollees that are in town. Kolton Houston is actually at his high school kind of enjoying the recruiting day with some of his teammates from Buford High School, so Kolton is here on campus too. The rest are on the way, and as Coach Garner said, we're very, very excited about these young men that have chosen Georgia."

On assistant coaches Scott Lakatos and Todd Grantham...

"There really wasn't a lot of time left in the recruiting period when we brought Todd and Scott in. As soon as we could get them out on the road we got them out on the road. Coach Grantham did a great job of passing the test on the first time around. That NCAA test isn't an easy thing to pass, especially if you have been out of it for quite some time. When you're in it year after year after year it's not so bad, but to kind of jump in cold turkey, the first night he got in we had him taking the test. I want to thank (UGA Compliance Director) Eric Baumgartner for showing up not in the middle of the night, but at nighttime to administer the test and get Coach Grantham to the point where he could get on the road and do it. I'll say that one thing I really love about these two men is they really understand what they want and what they are looking for. They are tremendous evaluators and they are the right kind of people. That always has to be a big part of the hiring process. I have to feel comfortable that they are the right kind of men to guide these players of ours, so we are very excited about them being here. There's a great buzz and a great excitement around our Butts-Mehre building with our coaches, staff and players realizing there is going to be some change and everybody is excited about showing what they can do."

On the challenges of closing out the recruiting season following the coaching changes...

"Recruiting is a lot about relationships. Anytime there is some kind of change on your staff for whatever reason, the relationships that have been built throughout this recruiting process were broken. I think the timing of the hire taking as long as it did, it did put a strain on these young men that we had committed. We know that some guys changed their mind. I think it drives the point home even moreso that it is very much about relationships. It does make a big difference to these young men who they've been talking with and getting to know. I know young men love Georgia and love other universities they go to, but it is a lot about people. That was a challenge and not everybody stuck to their commitment, but it was the fact that the relationships were different."

On an early signing period...

"I would be for an early signing date if there was a stipulation that all of the early signees would not take official visits until after they signed with the school they knew they wanted to go to. If you had the early signing date somewhere in November as some people have suggested, then the whole recruiting calendar gets moved up. Before you know it every single weekend is a large recruiting weekend, official visit weekend. You are trying to coach a team and you are trying to recruit; it's just very, very difficult to do. I think people would be pushing for legislation to have official visits in the summer. I really think we need to keep as much sanity in this thing as we can for the college coaches, the high school coaches and the players themselves and the families."

On how coaching changes impact players' decisions

"Anything and everything that another school can use to create some doubt in a young man's mind, that's what they'll do. So, we were certainly dealing with that. Also, starting out in a 4-3 in the recruiting of this class and changing to a 3-4 [system]. ... When you hear 3-4 compared to 4-3, it causes some curiosity and maybe even some concern, but again I think most of that concern has a lot of to do with everybody trying to create doubt. We're very confident and trying to do the right thing. We're also confident in that a lot of NFL teams and college teams are moving toward this trend, so we're moving to the front end of this trend."

On the issue of depth at the wide receiver position

"Depth is definitely an issue at receiver. I would say we don't have, at this moment, a good number that I feel comfortable having – and that's always give or take one or two. One thing I'm excited about and confident in is our tight end position. What you're looking for in offensive football is a chance to have some mismatches, whether it be at receiver, tight end, running back, whatever it may be. That's what you're always looking for – we're blessed with four outstanding tight ends. We certainly have playmakers and good solid depth with guys that can really play that position. I think that takes a little of the burden off the wide receiving corps. That's not to say we won't continue to play three-receiver sets. We're not going to quit doing that by any means. Usually during the season you're probably going to play around six or seven [receivers] and that's what we have right now, so everybody's going to get their share. We need to stay healthy at that position."

On the health of Kris Durham

"He will be [100-percent] by the time we're playing. I don't think he has any limitations right now – he's doing his offseason program full speed, actually running routs and catching balls. He was doing that during the later end of the season and certainly at the bowl practice, so he'll have no limitations throughout spring ball."

Assistant Coach/Recruiting Coordinator Rodney Garner:**Opening Statement...**

"I'd like to thank everybody for coming. I want to thank our staff and everybody for how hard everybody has worked this recruiting season. Obviously, we faced some difficulties, but I was really please with how everything came out. We are really excited about this class. We are excited about the young men that are going to be coming into our program. We feel that the Bulldog Nation will be excited about these guys too. We feel like they are going to be tremendous assets to this program, both on the field and off the field in the classroom and the community. We are really excited about this class, and I don't want any mistake to be made about that with how please we are with these guys that are coming to University of Georgia."

On whether he was surprised about signing fewer than 25...

"We could have gone out and possibly signed other guys and fulfilled that number if we just wanted to meet a quota. But we felt good about the nucleus that we put together, and we felt like at this point we wanted to stay status quo and be able to evaluate to make sure that going into the future, we'll be able to have the personnel in place that's going to fit with the scheme coach (Todd) Grantham wants to run, so I think strategically we made some decisions on where we wanted to stop the number."

On the coaching change's impact

It's challenging, obviously, with it coming in the time period it did, but everyone really worked hard and worked well together. We operated as a team, which we've always done at the University of Georgia. We're a family. Every one of the coaches worked extremely hard and so did all our support staff. We did a good job of holding everybody together. Obviously we had a couple defections here at the end, but we've always stressed that we want a young man that wants to be at the University of Georgia, wants to be a part of this program. We're excited about the young men that we have coming in and look forward to developing future stars. We have no questions or reservations about the way it turned out."

Full List of Signees

2010 Georgia Bulldog Signing Day - Football					
NAME	HT	WT	POS	LAST SCHOOL	HOMETOWN
Demetre Baker	6-0	200	Linebacker	Orange Park H.S.	Orange Park, Fla.
Brent Benedict	6-5	273	Offensive Tackle	The Bolles School	Jacksonville, Fla.
Michael Bennett	6-3	186	Wide Receiver	Alpharetta H.S.	Alpharetta, Ga.
Brandon Burrows	6-3	240	Defensive End	Walton H.S.	Marietta, Ga.
Marc Deas	6-1	185	Defensive Back	Osceola H.S.	Kissimmee, Fla.
Jalen Fields	6-5	250	Defensive End	Dalton H.S.	Dalton, Ga.
Kenarious Gates	6-5	300	Offensive Tackle	Greenville H.S.	Grantville, Ga.
Jakar Hamilton	6-2	196	Safety	Ga. Military College	Edgeville, S.C.
Kolton Houston	6-5	270	Offensive Lineman	Buford H.S.	Buford Ga.
Ken Malcome	6-0	212	Running Back	Southwest Dekalb H.S.	Decatur, Ga.
Hutson Mason	6-3	190	Quarterback	Lassiter H.S.	Marietta, Ga.
Dexter Morant	6-7	240	Defensive End	Manning H.S.	Manning, S.C.
Alec Ogletree	6-3	215	Defensive Back	Newnan H.S.	Newnan, Ga.
Alexander Ogletree	5-10	205	Linebacker	Newnan H.S.	Newnan, Ga.
Lonnie Outlaw	6-5	180	Wide Receiver	Wilcox County H.S.	Rochelle, Ga.
Derek Owens	5-9	180	Defensive Back	Andrew Jackson H.S.	Jacksonville, Fla.
Garrison Smith	6-3	250	Defensive Tackle	Douglas H.S.	Atlanta, Ga.
T.J. Stripling	6-6	215	Defensive End	Southwest Dekalb H.S.	Decatur, Ga.
Mike Thornton	6-1	280	Defensive Tackle	Stephenson H.S.	Stone Mountain, Ga.