

Texas' recruiting class ranks No. 5 in nation

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 03 February 2011 14:30

AUSTIN (AP) — After signing so many top recruiting classes, Texas coach Mack Brown faced a new challenge: holding one together after the first losing season in 13 years and an offseason of turmoil.

Brown said Wednesday he was astonished Texas would hold on to and sign 22 recruits in a class rated — once again — among the best in the country.

Florida State had the top ranked recruiting class in the nation, Texas came in No. 5 according to reports.

No day was tougher than Dec. 11 when Texas was hosting 14 recruits and their families. Defensive coordinator and coach-in-waiting Will Muschamp talked to them at breakfast. Just before dinner, the news broke that Muschamp was leaving to be the head coach at Florida.

Muschamp was one of six assistant coaches to leave in the offseason.

Brown's message to the stunned recruits: "Trust me. I'll hire people you like."

If they didn't like the new coaches and wanted to sign somewhere else, Brown said he'd personally call other schools on their behalf.

"It was a little uncertain," Brown said. "Some of them looked at me like I was crazy."

In the end, Texas signed all but one of the 23 players who made official visits to campus.

"It shows you their love for this university and commitment to us," Brown said.

Texas went 5-7 in 2010 and the loss of several longtime assistants upset the usually smooth operation of recruiting. Brown, the master closer of the recruiting pitch, was left as the chief organizer of staying in touch with players, monitoring the Internet to see which opponents swooping in to steal them away, and arranging meals, airplanes and anything else he needed to bring in coaching candidates for interviews. Brown's wife Sally pitched in a lot of help.

"It was definitely a mom and pop shop there for a while as we were trying to hold it all together," Brown said.

The top players in the 2011 freshmen class include running back Malcolm Brown of San Antonio, a USA Today and Parade All-American who led Cibolo Steele High School to a state championship and rushed for 6,663 yards and 86 touchdowns in his career.

At 6-foot, 215 pounds, Malcolm Brown is often compared to former Texas running back Cedric Benson, who rushed for 5,540 yards from 2001-2004.

Wide receiver Jaxon Shipley of Brownwood (Texas) High School, is another high school All-American whose older brother, Jordan, was a record-setting pass catcher at Texas.

On film, Jaxon Shipley is an exact copy of his brother with speed, good hands and the ability to return kicks. Jaxon Shipley will wear No. 8 just like his brother did.

All but one of the signees come from Texas. The only out-of-state player is Josh Turner, a defensive back and kick returner from Oklahoma City Millwood High School.

The losing season didn't chase off recruits like some might have expected. Texas typically secures nonbinding verbal commitments months early and those players had come of age during Texas' great run from 2005-2009 when the Longhorns won a national championship, played for another and narrowly missed a shot at a third.

Brown has said that all positions are open heading into spring practice, giving the incoming freshman a chance to earn playing time right away. Four of them are already enrolled in class and will participate in spring drills.

Even those that don't report until summer won't be that far behind considering Texas is installing completely new offensive and defensive schemes, Brown said.

"It's one thing we've sold these kids on. They're (only) 15 days behind when they get here in

Texas' recruiting class ranks No. 5 in nation

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 03 February 2011 14:30

June," Brown said. "It's a great time to be a freshman."