

Sports Columnist Taylor Harris addresses media hype on National Signing Day — Duncanville Panther Prints

Taylor Harris

The press promotes national signing day making celebrities out of high school athletes. They however spotlight only those they feel to be the top college prospects and miss those such as the six from here that signed last week. (Lasheena Frost photo)



Lights. Camera. Action. One day, just one, where they are idolized like the multi-million \$ movie stars. Interviews, speeches accompanied by big cheesy smiles. It's a big show. We're not talking about Super Bowl champs. These are simply the top high school football prospects in the recruiting class of 2011. That day is Feb. 2, National Signing Day.

Hailing from Columbus, Georgia, senior Isaiah Crowell, the nation's top running back, decided to put on a show for the press when he signed Groundhog Day. Surely Crowell was to sign for University of Alabama with his all gray suit decked with a burgundy tie.

It wasn't that simple.

Attempting to throw the crowd off, Crowell brings out a puppy bull dog. Yes a puppy! For those who didn't catch on, this was Crowell's way of announcing his decision to play for the University of Georgia. He's merely 17 or 18 years old, hasn't ran one yard on a college field, at the least, walked across the stage, and he wants to pull stunts. This is was a little outside the box, but not completely unusual, for those ESPN regular watchers who have seen magic hat tricks and many other escapades before.

Who's to blame? Players honestly, can't be blamed for all of the nonsense. They didn't ask to be in the spotlight, they simply say it creeping towards them with a few write ups here and there and went along with the show. The media, paparazzi, the scuttle butts are the ones to blame. Still, their fault is not at giving these players homage ore recognition.

That's to be applauded.

However, putting these players up on a pedestal that they have not reached yet is not fair to the player whatsoever. Sure, these football players have worked hard. Yes, they deserve a little acknowledgment for their achievements on the field. Making them out as the All-American hero of the century is a little too much.

Some of them have gotten their lucky 70's to pass and play, been the highlight of the week from August to November. They've Googled themselves "a couple" of times to know where they stand, so a full paid scholarship to get their education for four years is enough.

Top recruits in Texas were wide receiver Mike Davis, and defensive end Reggie Wilson. However those here at our school didn't get the chance to get out off first block and sign because of our four day winter break lasting from Feb. 1 – 4. Their lights were out. Most of them spent the day bored taking pictures with their camera phone and the only action they got was watching their fellow classmates of 2011 vainness on ESPN. When the mock day took place at our school with a few cameras, the players' family members looked on and players signing a fresh crisp white blank piece of paper.

That's exactly how they'll start their careers off in college. Blank. Fresh.

No matter how they were ranked in high school, every player will have to prove themselves once they step on the college campus. Players at Duncanville shouldn't feel any less fortunate than their classmates marveled upon on TV. These football players are signing, which means they're getting a full, three quarter or half paid scholarship to help with their education because of their hard work over the years.

It's the nation's top entertainers/ football players who will probably be getting red shirted or unknown during the next two or three years that better watch out. As for the media, flashing a camera on the next National Merit Scholar or Valedictorian could be a bit more meaningful. If players get too cocky, they should have the

thought of Xavier Crawford, the nation's top high school football recruit in 1988, who is now serving an eight year sentence behind bars to check their ego at the door.