

Duke makes a call to sleeper PF



Gavin Schilling

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A year ago Duke got re-involved with Amile Jefferson and waited out his recruitment into the Spring signing period. After seeing a couple of targets go elsewhere this Fall, the Blue Devils are looking around again for a potential late signee, and appear to have found one in the form of Gavin Schilling. The 6'9, 235 pounder spoke with TDD about that on Sunday.

TDD: It appears that your recruiting has gotten a shot in the arm since you got to Findlay, yes?

Gavin Schilling: Definitely. Ever since I got here to Findlay Prep, the result of that has been this increased attention. It sort of legitimizes all the work i've been putting in, which is really good.

What prompted the move to Findlay?

At De La Salle, I liked the coach and everything, but I felt like Findlay Prep was a better fit for me and the coaches came and saw me over the summer at the Nike EYBL in Oakland. They liked the way I played, and they called me and asked me if I wanted to come play at Findlay Prep. I was ready to make the move.

How long had you been there when it was announced that Coach Peck was leaving?

I had been here for about a month and a half, then he announced it and Coach Simon took over. It was a real big shock to all of us, but we all got past it and now we're happy with Coach Simon and what he's doing.

What's Coach Simon like as a head coach?

He's a good coach. He's nice, and his style is calm. He gets the message through in a different way. He's very smart with what he wants to do and with numbers, stuff like turnovers and how that translates into what we need to work on.

What have you really improved on since you got to Findlay Prep?

I feel like my overall game is getting sharper. My post moves, shooting, moves off the dribble...everything is getting better.

Is your role similar at Findlay Prep as to what you did at De La Salle?

Coach Simon lets me take a couple dribbles and also lets me work inside in the post, that's pretty much my role, to rebound and run the floor.

What kind of player do you want to be in college?

I want to be a stretch four. I want to be a guy who can play inside and outside. That's a role that pretty much most of the coaches are saying I can play, and that's what I'm telling them that I'm hoping to play and they are agreeing with that.

How much are you paying attention to what's happening recruiting wise at the schools you are considering?

Yeah definitely, but really I look first at their system and see if I'm a good fit in their system. How good a school they are, and I also keep track of them on TV.

Do you have a relationship with any of the top guys in Chicago like Jabari Parker, Jahlil Okafor or Cliff Alexander or others?

Yeah definitely. I know all three of them really well. Jabari and Jahlil were teammates of mine this past summer in AAU on Mac Irvin Fire, and they are great guys. Both of them are real down to earth, and fun to be around them. I spent some good time with them this past summer, was great getting to know them better.

How's the adjustment for you been being out on the West Coast and away from family and friends?

I'm kind of used to it because my sophomore year I was actually in Germany, and I played for one year there, so I'm used to being away from my mom and my brother. Now that I'm gone again, and will eventually be gone for good, I've adjusted pretty well I'd say. And, being out here, it's a good environment. They definitely treat us well here. I've sacrificed a lot coming over here and so has my mom.

What was the Germany situation like?

It was a German boarding school, and their basketball team is one of the best teams in Germany. It was a different situation, but my dad is from Germany, and he knew the coach at this school, so they were in contact and he really wanted me to come over there. They wanted me to get both styles, and learn another part of my game. To mix the American and German styles. I improved over there very fast.

Are the German basketball players as physical as German soccer players are reported to be?

Actually not a lot. Soccer is huge in Germany, and the basketball playing style in Germany is a bit more soft. They play fundamentals, passing, timing, it's more a thinking game than a physical game like it is here.

Your name is going to be one of the hot names in your class since you elected to wait to sign until the late period. Does that bring extra pressure?

I feel good about that. I think it's good to wait and see what my options are. My plan is to play the season and give me some time to think about my options, and make a decision once I can do my official visits after the season is completed.

Every guy evaluates colleges differently--so what are your big criteria?

First of all, I want a great academic program. Secondly, a school that fits my style of play...I like to play fast, uptempo and third, the relationship with the coaching staff.

Academics being first priority--can you explain what you are examining with that aspect?

Definitely, I'm looking first to see if a school has my desired major, which is International Business. I'm interested in that because I speak three languages and that's going to be good for my future to have a degree in that. I want to have a successful future.

Which languages do you speak?

I speak German, French and English.

Did you grow up speaking German and French?

I grew up in France on the East side in a little city there. I actually was born in Germany and then moved to France and spent the first eight years of my life there, and then we moved to Chicago.

Were either of your parents in the military or government workers?

My dad used to work with the military when he was young, but not recently.

You mentioned style of play and wanting to play uptempo..what's your view on running structured offense, do you like that or do you really prefer up tempo all the time?

Running is always preferred, but when it comes to half court sets, I like to run a lot of pick and roll, pick and pop, get the ball in the post and score or relocate. Or running the high/low offense through that, I like all that stuff.

The stretch 4 is a popular position in college, have you been looking at anybody in college at that spot as you evaluate schools?

Yeah, there's been a few. I was watching Anthony Davis since he's from Chicago. This year, Brandon Ashley, he's at Arizona and he's from Findlay, I've been looking at his game. There's some other guys too that I look at, I just can't think of them right now.

Are there any schools in your mind that stand out with past players they've had at the stretch four spot?

Not really. Not at this point. Every school has a different style of play, there's no school that really stands out to me.

You've got a big mix of schools recruiting you from a variety of conferences. Does a conference's style of play factor into your decision?

Yeah, that's something I'm talking with Coach Simon a lot about. We want to really look at the different schools. I'm asking his opinion on different schools because he knows the NCAA and I'm also looking for myself, and watching teams on TV. I want to see what they are talking about so I can try and see how I fit in with what they are saying to me.

Can you share where you are at in the recruiting process with UCLA and Arizona, as you are close to them and they are recruiting you?

UCLA is recruiting me really hard, and they want me to come on a visit before the season but I don't know if that's going to happen. I'll be looking at them for sure to see what kind of fit they might be for me. With Arizona, they want me to come see a game during the season since Coach Simon will be coming up there during the season to visit with Brandon and other guys there we know, so I might go check them out.

Where does Duke stand in your recruitment?

They are a really recent addition. They contacted me a week ago after that game in Los Angeles at the Staples Center. I was real excited getting a call from them as a lot of people would be and I actually talked with Coach K earlier this week. Coach K is such a nice guy, and a down to earth guy. Just really cool. I'm real excited to get to know the coaching staff better and get to know the program more too.

So was there two different calls from Duke or was it just one conversation with Coach K?

It started out with an assistant texting me and then after that, Coach K called me, left a message and I called him back.

Was their interest unexpected?

Well, it really started with a text message so I knew a phone call was coming. I was real excited to get the call from the Coach K and from the Duke program, it's exciting because they are such a great program with a rich tradition.

What kind of stuff did you talk about with Coach K?

He talked about Mason Plumlee and Ryan Kelly, and that both are leaving after this year. He was telling me they need a guy like me because of my athletic ability and physicality to come in since they are losing Mason and Ryan after this season. He said they are looking forward to building a relationship with me.

What did Coach K say about your game as he was expressing interest in you?

He said he really liked my versatility, and the way I run the floor and my athleticism. He said he could help me develop my game, it was real cool to hear him talk about what he could do for me as a player.

Did he talk much about the Olympics?

Yeah, he talked about how similar we were because I've played overseas for a German team and how we shared that in common. It was nice talking with him about that. He's got this experience with the pros, it's definitely a plus because what he sees in the pros, it's a good part in what he's saying.

How do your early evaluations of Duke chart when looking at Plumlee and Kelly?

Duke uses their bigs really well in my opinion. Looking at Mason Plumlee, he's a guy like me, pretty versatile, and I like the way their bigs can step out and shoot. I really like the way they use their bigs, it's a good fit for me and the way I play.

Sounds like they got your attention so quickly--where do they fall on the consideration scale since they came in much later than other schools recruiting you?

I'm still very much open to my recruitment, and I haven't narrowed anything down. Duke coming in, that's a positive to me and I'm looking forward to building a better relationship with them.

Has the Duke staff talked with Coach Simon or any members of your family about you?

Yeah, Coach K called and talked with my mom on Wednesday this week. That went really well, and it sounds like they both really enjoyed their conversation from what my mom said.

What was her feedback to you?

We haven't had a chance actually yet to talk about what they talked about, but she texted me and told me that he called and they had a great conversation.

Wrapping up--are there any visits planned for the near future or is everything on hold until after the season?

Yeah, it's pretty much on hold, I might squeeze in one visit during the season, but I'm really not sure about that. More than likely I'll complete my official visits after the season.

Any early favorites for you or schools that you know for sure you want to go visit?

No, not at this point, I'm really wide open right now.