

# Humboldt Recruiting Class Adds Talent, Depth

**March 25, 2010**

While other schools sprinted to the finish line represented by the February 3 signing date, Humboldt State's coaching staff took a more diligent, patient approach to filling out its football roster.

The result is a deep and talented group of 17 athletes – 15 freshmen and two transfer students – who will join the Jacks in August with high expectations for success.

Also on board are four mid-year transfers who are already in school at HSU and have been actively involved in spring practice.

"We've learned that being patient is the best approach, because a lot of very good players are being recruited by bigger schools before NLI (National Letter of Intent) day arrives," Smith said. "We've been aggressively recruiting those players and have discovered that it's a smart way to operate."

Heading into his third season as the Jacks' head man, Smith has plenty of reasons to be optimistic about this year's recruiting class. With only 11 seniors departing the program last fall, the Jacks have been able to narrow their focus to include select players that will patch immediate holes and others that build the foundation for a strong future.

Already displaying their readiness are the four mid-year standouts the Jacks added this spring – free safety **Will Taylor**, linebacker **Michael Johnson**, defensive end **Jonathan Wells** and defensive tackle **Andrew Iupati**.

Iupati and Taylor both bring Division I experience to the HSU program, transferring in from the University of Oregon. Iupati, a 6-1, 295-pound lineman, provides "a tough body to get past," and Taylor brings excellent speed to the Jacks' secondary, Smith said.

Johnson, at 6-0, 235, is already contending for a starting linebacker position this spring, and Wells, at 6-4, 235, has "excellent speed and is very active," according to Smith. "They all fit in very well to what we're doing here."

Coming to HSU in August will be transfers **Jordan McGowan** and **Tanner Webb**, both of whom are counted on to bolster the Jacks' secondary. McGowan comes to HSU from Santa Rosa Junior College, and is a former 1st-team all-Redwood Empire selection at Santa Rosa High School. Webb is out of Bakersfield College, where he earned 1st-team selection in the Southern California Football Association last fall while leading his team in tackles.

Laying the groundwork for the future are the Jacks' incoming freshmen, most of whom Smith plans to redshirt this fall. "We recruit student-athletes who are committed to the academic and athletic goals we have as a program," Smith said. "We look for players who are going to be here for the next four or five years."

Among those players are two talented quarterbacks who recently signed NLIs, **Alex Cappellini** and **Zack Gauthier**. Cappellini was a 1st-team all-state and all-region selection last fall at Pinnacle High School in Phoenix, Ariz., and Gauthier was selected team MVP after leading his Saugus High School team to the Foothill League championships in 2009.

With five seniors manning the Jacks' offensive line this coming season, the Jacks again looked to the future in bringing in three highly-regarded prospects, **Derrick Austin**, **Braden Lyons** and **Jonathon West**.

Austin is a 6-2, 260-pound lineman who was selected for first team all-league honors and was voted team MVP at Riverside Polytechnic following his senior season. Lyons, who stands 6-5, 275, was a second-team all-league pick at Sonoma Valley High School, and West, 6-4, 255, helped Hesperia High School to a 10-0 record in 2009.

At the skill positions, HSU's freshman additions are wide receiver **Kaller Roemer** and running back **Ricky Sims**. Roemer was a two-time 1st-team all-Sea View League choice who made 71 catches for 1,005 yards in 2009. Sims rushed for 1,302 yards on 173 carries last fall at Petaluma High School.

On defense, Humboldt State's incoming freshman class features two linemen, two linebackers and four defensive backs.

The defensive front includes **Kelly Mitchell**, a 6-5, 230-pound end who was an all-Oakland Athletic League pick from Oakland High School. **Silas Sarvinski** (6-1, 225) is a local recruit who is coming to HSU from Ferndale High School, where he achieved Humboldt-Del Norte League Defensive MVP honors last fall. Sarvinski joins his brother, Casey, a junior who will play linebacker for the Jacks this fall.

Up-and-coming standouts at linebacker for the Jacks are **PJ Gremaud**, from St. Bonaventure High School in Ventura, and **Trevor Phillips**, from La Habra High School. Gremaud is a two-time all-Channel League selection, and Phillips was a 1st team all-CIF Southern Section award winner.

In the secondary, HSU's freshman roster includes **Dorian Crawford**, from Scripps Ranch High School in San Diego, **Joey DePalma**, out of Ponderosa High School in Shingle Springs, **Conner Waggoner**, from Petaluma's Casa Grande High School, and **Kohl Adams-Hurd**, from John Burroughs High School in Los Angeles.

Crawford is a standout cornerback who was chosen to the 1st team all-Eastern League and all-County squads, while DePalma is a speedster who set school records in the 100 meters and as a member of the 4x100 relay in track. Waggoner starred on both sides of the ball, and was a 1st-team all-Redwood Empire pick at wide receiver and linebacker, but will likely play strong safety for HSU. Adams-Hurd earned 1st-team all-Pacific League honors the past two seasons.

"We always expect to redshirt our freshmen, but some of them will probably surprise us," Smith said. "We have enough quality returning players that we have the luxury of taking more time to develop the freshmen, but if we see that someone can help us be a better football team in 2010, they could definitely see the field."