



## Illinois Announces 2011 Fighting Illini Football Signing Class

Feb. 2, 2011

**Willie Beavers**

**Line, 6-5, 310**

**Southfield, Mich. / Southfield-Lathrup**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... High school coach was Stephon Thompson ... Second-team All-Metro selection by Detroit News ... Listed No. 30 on Rivals.com's Michigan Top 30 list ... Named one of Michigan's Top 60 Blue Chip recruits by Detroit News. **Personal:** The son of Jacalyn and Willie Beavers ... Born Oct. 2, 1993 ... Chose Illinois over Western Michigan, Bowling Green and Akron.



**Chris Boles**

**Line, 6-5, 315**

**Toledo, Ohio / Central Catholic**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Scout.com and Rivals.com ... High school coach was Greg Dempsey ... Was first-team All-NW District selection as an offensive guard in 2010 ... Second-team All-Ohio Division II choice by AP in 2010 ... Rated one of the Top 50 players in the state of Ohio ... Ranked as No. 8 offensive lineman in state of Ohio by ScoutingOhio.com ... Played on both lines in high school ... Helped Central Catholic to an 8-2 record and second round of Division II playoffs in 2009... Played in the 2010 NUC All-World Gridiron Classic game ... All-Midwest choice by SuperPrep and PrepStar ... High school coach was Greg Dempsey. **Personal:** The son of Veronica Joshaway and Citris Boles Sr. ... Born March 14, 1993 ... Chose Illinois over Wisconsin, Cincinnati, Memphis, Miami (Ohio), Syracuse and Toledo.



**Darrius Caldwell**

**Line, 6-5, 210**

**Atlanta, Ga. / Mays**

**High School:** Rated a four-star recruit by ESPNU and Scout.com and a three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... SuperPrep All-Dixie Region selection ... All-Southeast Region by PrepStar ... High school coach was Dominic Calloway ... MVP of the 2011 Metro Atlanta All-Star game... Selected as one of Georgia's Fab 50 recruits by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution ... Honorable mention Class AAAA All-State ... Selected No. 27 on Rivals.com's Georgia Top 30 list. **Personal:** The son of Tuesday Caldwell ... Chose Illinois over Georgia Tech, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, South Carolina and West Virginia.



**Ralph Cooper**  
**Back, 6-1, 222**  
**Winnsboro, S.C. / Fairfield Central**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... High school coach was Reggie Kennedy ... Ranked as one of the Top 30 players in South Carolina ... Selected to play in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas ... Earned second-team All-State honors as a linebacker ... SuperPrep All-Mid Atlantic selection ... **All-Atlantic Region selection by PrepStar** ... Helped Griffins to 12-2 records in 2010, finishing as the Class 3-AAA Upper State runner-up ... Only two losses came to the state champions ... Totaled 154 tackles (14.0 avg) in 2010 ... Ranked as South Carolina's leading tackler in total tackles and fourth in sacks with 0.7 per game ... Had 120 tackles with six sacks and three interceptions as a junior in 2009. **Personal:** The son of Cathy and Ralph Cooper... Born Feb. 6, 1993 ... Chose Illinois over Georgia Tech ... Mike Anderson (former NFL RB with Broncos and Ravens) and Tyler Thigpen (current Miami Dolphin QB) attended Fairfield Central ... Winnsboro population in 2009 was 3,630.



**Valdón Cooper**  
**Back, 5-10, 170**  
**Elberton, Ga. / Elbert County**

**High School:** Three-star recruit by Rivals ... Was a running back and safety in high school ... As a senior, carried the ball 94 times for 906 yards and 12 touchdowns, while catching four passes for 48 yards ... Defensively, registered 25 tackles, three for loss, two pass breakups, two fumble recoveries and one interception ... Also returned six kickoffs, including two for touchdowns, for an average of 48.8 yards per return ... Returned five punts for 25.6 average and one TD ... Runs a sub-4.4 40-yard dash ... Earned three medals in the Class 3-A Georgia state track championships as a junior, winning the long jump, finishing third in the 110 hurdles and was fourth in the triple jump ... Class AA All-State pick in 2010 ... High school coach was Sid Fritts. **Personal:** The son of Danyell and Mecole Hardman, and Valdón Cooper Sr. ... Born Oct. 5, 1992 ... An outstanding student, chose Illinois over Air Force, the Naval Academy and West Virginia ... Also had a track scholarship offer from Clemson.



**Jon Davis**  
**Back, 6-3, 230**  
**Louisville, Ky. / Middletown Eastern**

**High School:** Four-star prospect by Scout.com ... No. 7 tight end prospect in the nation by Scout.com ... Top ranked player in Kentucky by Scout.com ... Ranked in the ESPN Top 150 as No. 138 ... A **PrepStar All-American** as a tight end ... Rushed for 934 yards (averaging 14 yards a carry) and 16 TDs, and had 24 catches for 334 yards and two TDs ... In his career, he ran for 1,742 yards (averaging 9 yards a carry) and had 93 receptions for 1,273 yards and 13 TDs ... Member of the Lexington Herald-Leader Class of the Commonwealth ... Second-team all-state pick by the Louisville Courier-Journal ... High school coach was Ken Whalen ... No. 3 on Rivals.com's Kentucky Top 30 list. **Personal:** The son of Juanette and Reggie Davis ... Chose Illinois over Kentucky, Purdue, Oregon and Louisville.



**Henry Dickinson**  
**Back, 6-4, 210**  
**Memphis, Tenn. / Memphis University HS**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com and ESPN ... Two-star recruit by Scout.com ... High school coach was Bobby Alston ... Won Tennessee Titans Mr. Football Lineman of the Year Award for Division 2-AA, the same award won by current Illini linebacker [Jonathan Brown](#) in 2009 ... Named to the Tennessee Sports Writers Association Division II All-State team ... One of five captains selected by his teammates ... Registered 116 tackles, 12 for loss, forced four fumbles, blocked one kick and had four interceptions in 2010 ... Played in the AutoZone Liberty High School All-Star game in

Memphis ... One of five finalists for the Tennessee Defensive Best of the Preps award ... Helped lead the Owls to perfect 13-0 record and state title in 2009, finishing among nation's Top 10 teams... Also a starter and captain for the lacrosse team and also played high school basketball. **Personal:** Son of Chesley and David Porteous ... Secretary/treasurer of the Student Council ... Participated in the Civic Service Organization...Chose Illinois over Ole Miss and Southern Mississippi.



**Tony Durkin**  
**Line, 6-3, 260**  
**Tinley Park, Ill. / Andrew HS**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... High school coach was Jim Zimmer ... Joins high school teammate Chris O'Connor as part of the '11 Illini recruiting class... Ranked among the top 26 prospects in the state of Illinois and one of the top 12 centers in the nation by Scout ... **PrepStar** and SuperPrep **All-Midwest** selection... First-team all-conference as a junior and senior ... First-team All-Area by the Southtown Star newspaper ... Special mention All-State by the Chicago Tribune ... No. 26 prospect on Rivals.com's Illinois postseason Top 30 list ... Also an all-conference performer in baseball. **Personal:** Son of Michelle and Dan Durkin ... Born Nov. 12, 1992 ... Chose Illinois over Minnesota, Arizona, Cincinnati and Northern Illinois.



**Justin DuVernois**  
**Punter, 6-1, 190**  
**Plantation, Fla. / St. Thomas Aquinas**

**High School:** First-team All-Broward County in 2010 ... Kicked and punted in Broward/Dade Counties All-Star Game ... Averaged 39.7 yards per punt as a senior ... 11 of his 29 punts were downed inside 20-yard line ... Helped St. Thomas Aquinas to Florida 5A state championships and national high school championships in 2008 and 2010 ... Had a 71-yard punt in the state title game in 2010 ... High school coach was George Smith ... **All-Southeast Region selection by PrepStar**. **Personal:** The son of Michelle and Dennis DuVernois ... Chosen to Broward County All-Star Academic Team ... Chose Illinois over Kansas, Syracuse and Miami (Fla.).



**Josh Ferguson**  
**Back, 5-10, 180**  
**Naperville, Ill. / Joliet Catholic**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... Chicago Tribune first-team All-State selection ... Chicago Sun-Times All-Area selection ... MVP of the East Suburban Catholic League ... Joliet Herald News Co-MVP and Player of the Year in 2010 ... Illinois High School Football Coaches Association Class 5A All-State ... Carried 145 times for 1,868 yards (12.9 yards per carry) and 25 touchdowns for a team that reached the Class 5A quarterfinals and was the 2009 5A state runner-up ... Champaign News-Gazette All-State special mention selection ... **All-Midwest selection by PrepStar** ... High school coach was Dan Sharp. **Personal:** The son of Danielle and Collin Ferguson ... Chose Illinois over Air Force, Ball State, East Carolina, Memphis, Ohio and Toledo.



**Pat Flavin**  
**Line, 6-7, 260**  
**Lisle, Ill. / Benet Academy**

**High School:** A three-star recruit and rated one of the top 10 recruits in Illinois by Rivals.com ... Ranked among top 30 offensive tackles in the nation by Rivals ... **All-Midwest choice by SuperPrep** and **PrepStar** ... High school coach was Pat New ... Chicago Tribune second-team All-State pick ... All-conference selection as a junior and senior ... All-area selection as a junior and senior ... Earned all-state recognition as a junior and senior ... No. 11 on Rivals.com's Illinois Postseason Top 30 list ... Also all-conference and all-area performer in track and field. **Personal:** The son of Karen and Michael Flavin ...

Intends to major in history and political science ... Chose Illinois over Arizona, Baylor, Boise State, Boston College, California, Oregon, Purdue, UCLA and Washington.



**Jordan Frysinger**  
**Back, 6-0, 175**  
**Corning, N.Y. / Corning**

**High School:** A two-star recruit by Rivals.com ... Semifinalist for New York's Gatorade Player of the Year ... First-team Class AA all-state selection by the New York State Sportswriters Association ... Rushed for 1,385 yards and 27 touchdowns on only 90 carries, an average of 15.4 yards per carry ... Scored a total of 32 touchdowns, with three coming on returns of his six interceptions ... Nineteen of his TDs covered 30 or more yards ... In his three-year high school career, Frysinger ran for 3,940 yards on 343 attempts and scored 74 touchdowns ... Helped Corning to a 9-1 record and Section 4 Class AA championship in the inaugural season for the team ... Previously, Corning East and Corning West had separate football teams ... Was a second-team Class A all-state pick as a running back at Corning East in 2009 ... Rated as one of the top high school lacrosse players in the nation with an offer to play that sport at Johns Hopkins ... Rated one of the top 15 players in state of New York by SuperPrep ... Averaged 10.6 yards a carry as a junior in 2009 ... High school coach was Tim Hughes. **Personal:** The son of Sharon and Charlie Frysinger.



**Zeph Grimes**  
**Back, 5-11, 212**  
**Bamberg, S.C. / Bamberg-Ehrhardt**

**High School:** Named to the Class A All-State team by the High School Sports Report ... A three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... **All-Atlantic Region selection by PrepStar** ... Rated one of the top 30 players in South Carolina by Rivals.com ... As a junior, piled up 80 tackles, including 38 tackles for loss, 18 sacks, along with two interceptions ... Chosen for the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas game against all-stars from North Carolina and the NUC All-World Gridiron Classic All-Star game ... All-Mid-Atlantic choice by SuperPrep ... Selected No. 27 on Rivals.com's South Carolina Top 30 list ... High school coach was Butch Crosby. **Personal:** The son of Terrie Johnson ... Born Dec. 28, 1992 ... Chose Illinois over Michigan State, Colorado, Northwestern, Ole Miss, Arkansas and Tulsa.



**Chris Jones**  
**Line, 6-5, 305**  
**Jacksonville, Fla. / Raines**

**High School:** A Three-star recruit by Scout.com and Rivals.com ... Rated as one of the top 50 defensive tackle prospects in the nation ... Second-team 4A All-State selection ... Orlando Sentinel Super 75 member ... First-team All-Gateway Conference in 2010 ... Second on team with 72 tackles, including six tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery ... High school coach was Deran Wiley ... Also plays on the Vikings basketball team ... Selected for the Florida Shrine Bowl All-Star Game. **Personal:** Born May 3, 1991 ... Chose Illinois over North Carolina State, Louisville, Miami (FL), Rutgers and Tennessee.



**Ted Karras**  
**Line, 6-3, 292**  
**Indianapolis, Ind. / Cathedral**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com and two-star by Scout.com ... High school coach was Rick Streiff ... **All-Midwest Region pick by PrepStar** ... Rated one of the Top 25 offensive guard prospects and a three-star recruit by ESPN.com...Earned Indiana Associated Press Class 4A All-State honors in 2009 and 2010 ... Named to the Catholic All-American team ... Indiana Digest Top 15 selection ...Named to the Indiana Football Coaches Association Top 50 All-State team ... Selected No.

15 on Rivals.com's Indiana Top 30 list ... Helped Cathedral to 4A state title in 2010. **Personal:** The son of Jennifer and Ted Karras ... Chose Illinois over Indiana, Iowa State, Wyoming and UCLA from more than 15 offers ... Also known as TK3 ...Seventh member of his family to play football in the Big Ten, including his great-uncle, Alex Karras, who won the Outland Trophy as a defensive tackle at Iowa and was named to the Pro Bowl four times in the NFL with the Detroit Lions before going into acting, including a starring role in the 1980s sitcom "Webster." ... Grandfather, Ted Karras, played defensive tackle at Indiana and five of his nine seasons in the NFL with the Chicago Bears, helping Bears to '63 World Championship ... His father, Ted Karras Jr. (now the coach at Marian University), was a defensive tackle at Northwestern and played briefly with the Washington Redskins...Great-uncle Paul Karras, played at Iowa; great-uncle Lou Karras, played at Purdue and three seasons with the Washington Redskins; and, uncle Tony Karras, played at Northwestern.



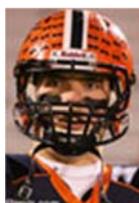
**Dondi Kirby**  
**Back, 6-3, 190**  
**Monroeville, Penn. / Gateway**

**High School:** A four-star recruit by Rivals.com ... SuperPrep All-American and All-Northeast selection ... **PrepStar All-American** ... Missed entire senior season with leg injury ... Rated among the top eight players in state of Pennsylvania by PrepStar ... Selected No. 7 on Rivals.com's Pennsylvania Top 30 list ... Was an all-conference performer in 2008 and 2009 ... High school coach was Terry Smith ... **Personal:** The son of Dondi Kirby Sr. ... Chose Illinois over Iowa, Maryland, Southern California and Florida.



**Kenny Knight**  
**Back, 6-4, 190**  
**Beverly Hills, Mich. / Country Day**

**High School:** A three-star wide receiver by Scout.com ... Earned All-State honors as a senior after catching 42 passes for 560 yards and seven touchdowns ... Helped the Yellowjackets to a 10-1 record ... Rated as one of the Top 15 prospects in state of Michigan by Rivals.com and No. 21 Blue Chip prospect by Detroit News ... All-Midwest choice by SuperPrep ... High school coach was Dan MacLean ... As a junior, was a starter on Country Day's Class B state championship basketball squad, and is team's starting forward and top defensive stopper this year for the state's top-ranked team... Has a 36-inch vertical jump. **Personal:** The son of Daphne and Ken Knight ... Born Feb. 3, 1993 ...Chose Illinois over Wisconsin, Minnesota, Purdue, Northwestern, Stanford, Cincinnati and Indiana.



**Matt LaCrosse**  
**Back, 6-6, 220**  
**Naperville, Ill. / North**

**High School:** Chicago Tribune honorable mention All-State ... Rated a three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... Named to The Champaign News-Gazette's All-State special mention team as a quarterback ... Earned IHSFCA All-State honors ... SuperPrep and **PrepStar All-Midwest** selection ... No. 23 on Rivals.com's Illinois Postseason Top 30 list ... High school coach was Sean Drendal ... Also an excellent basketball player at North. **Personal:** The son of Kim and Dave LaCrosse ... Chose Illinois over Minnesota, Purdue and Michigan.



**Scott McDowell**  
**Line, 6-5, 280**  
**Hinsdale, Ill. / Central**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... First-team all-conference as a senior ... All-Area DuPage County ... Honorable-mention All-State by Chicago Tribune ... All-Midwest choice by SuperPrep... High school coach was Mike DiMatteo. **Personal:** The son of Sheila and Roger McDowell ... Born Dec. 23, 1992 ... Chose Illinois over Cincinnati, Miami (Ohio), Toledo and Northern Illinois ... Plans on majoring in business.



**Kenny Nelson**  
**Line, 6-6, 245**  
**Detroit, Mich. / Cass Tech**

**High School:** A two-star recruit by Rivals.com ... Earned second-team All-Metro Detroit honors as a defensive end by Detroit News for his play on an 11-1 Technicians team ... Named No. 20 Blue Chip Recruit from Michigan by Detroit News ... High school coach was Thomas Wilcher. **Personal:** The son of Linda Meredith and Kenneth Nelson ... Chose Illinois over Western Michigan.



**Nick North**  
**Back, 6-1, 195**  
**Hollywood, Fla. / McArthur**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com, Scout.com and ESPNU ... Played for McArthur's varsity all four years in high school ... Earned All-Broward County honors as a junior and senior after recording five interceptions as a junior and compiling 85 tackles, one interception, six forced fumbles, eight PBUs, five tackles for loss and five sacks as a senior... Participates in track as well ... Has been timed at 4.5 seconds in the 40-yard dash ... High school coach was Michael Zaara. **Personal:** The son of Linda and Willis North ... Born Dec. 13, 1992 ... Chose Illinois over Kansas, Kansas State, Rutgers, TCU, Central Florida, Memphis and New Mexico.



**Chris O'Connor**  
**Line, 6-5, 240**  
**Tinley Park, Ill. / Andrew**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Scout.com, ESPNU and Rivals.com ... SuperPrep and **PrepStar All-Midwest** selection... High school teammate of fellow Illini class member Tony Durkin ... First-Team all-conference as a junior and senior ... First-Team All-Area by Southtown Star newspaper ... Academic All-State pick ... High School coach was Jim Zimmer. **Personal:** The son of Cindy and Kevin O'Connor ... Born Nov. 1, 1992 ... Chose Illinois over Air Force and Colorado State ... Plans to major in civil engineering.



**Reilly O'Toole**  
**QB, 6-4, 215**  
**Wheaton, Ill. / Wheaton Warrenville South**

**High School:** Rated a top 100 player by Tom Lemming ... A three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... 2010 Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times and Champaign News-Gazette Illinois Player of the Year and first-team All-State selection by all three ... Arlington Heights Daily Herald Player of the Year ... ESPNU Illinois Player of the Year ... Gatorade Player of the Year ... NCSA Player of the Year ... Illinois High School Coaches' Association Class 7A All-State ... Helped lead the Tigers to Illinois Class 7A states titles in 2009 and 2010 ... Completed 186 of 252 (74 percent) passes for 3,187 yards and 42 scores with just three interceptions in 2010 ... Rushed for 393 yards on 70 carries with six touchdowns as a senior ... Rated the top QB in the state of Illinois in 2010 ... SuperPrep and **PrepStar All-Midwest** selection ... No. 10 player on Rivals.com's Illinois postseason Top 30 list ... Completed 62 percent of his passes for 2,119 yards and 24 touchdowns with three interceptions as a junior ... High school coach was Ron Muhitch ...

Also a regular on the Wheaton-Warrenville South basketball team. **Personal:** The son of Jenny and Michael O'Toole...Born April 5, 1993...Chose Illinois over Iowa and Northwestern.



**Eaton Spence**  
**Back, 6-0, 175**  
**Belle Glade, Fla. / Glades Day**

**High School:** A two-star recruit by Rivals ... Played running back, receiver and defensive back during senior season, while helping Glades Day to back-to-back state championships in the Florida 1-B Division ... A three-sport athlete at Glades Day, also played basketball and ran track ... High school coach was Pete Walker. **Personal:** Chose Illini over Northern Illinois, Florida International, Western Michigan and West Virginia.



**Clint Tucker**  
**Line, 6-2, 285**  
**East St. Louis, Ill. / East St. Louis**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... Named the No. 7 prospect at the 2010 National Underclassmen Combine All-World Gridiron Classic ... Listed as No. 6 on the St. Louis Post-Dispatch Super 30, the top 30 college prospects in St. Louis metro area ... Two-time St. Louis Post-Dispatch first-team All-Metro selection as an offensive lineman ... Had 44 tackles and two sacks in 2010 ... No. 17 prospect on Rivals.com's Illinois Postseason Top 30 list ... SuperPrep and **PrepStar All-Midwest** selection...High school coach was Darren Sunkett. **Personal:** The son of Cathy Tucker and Clint Tucker ... Lives with his grandparents, Cathy and Charles Tucker ... Chose Illinois over Kentucky and Kansas.



**Jeremey Whitlow**  
**Back, 6-2, 190**  
**Cleveland, Ohio / Central Catholic**

**High School:** A three-star recruit by Rivals.com ... Led Central Catholic with seven touchdown receptions and averaged over 21 yards per catch as a senior, with 17 receptions for 362 yards for the Ironmen ... Also an all-conference performer in track... High school coach was John Lundy. **Personal:** The son of Selena Hall and Willie Whitlow... Intends to major in engineering ... Chose Illinois over Toledo, Miami (Ohio) and Akron.



**Donovonn Young**  
**Back, 5-11, 215**  
**Houston, Texas / Katy**

**High School:** Three-star recruit by Rivals.com and Scout.com ... Houston Touchdown Club Player of the Year Finalist for 2010 after rushing for 2,332 yards (9 yards per carry) and scoring 36 touchdowns ... First-team All-Greater Houston selection by Houston Chronicle ... Set Katy HS single-season rushing touchdown record with 36 in 2010 while helping his team to a 13-1 record ... Ranked 23rd in the nation in rushing and 28th in the nation in scoring in 2010 ... All-District first-team selection in 2010 and was District 19-5A's co-MVP ... Rushed for 238 yards in 38-35 regional final loss to Pearland in front of 41,000 fans at Rice Stadium ... Second-team All-District 17-5 pick as a sophomore (at Humble HS) and as a junior when he rushed for 665 yards and 10 TDs at Katy ... High School coach was Gary Joseph. **Personal:** The son of Sonja Eckford and Cartrell Young ... Born Nov. 30, 1992 ...Cousin, Sammy Davis, played at Texas A&M and later in the NFL ... Chose Illinois over North Texas and McNeese State ... Academic All-America selection.