

## 1998 Freshmen Class

INCOMING ANALYSIS AND RATING - 4.3\* Excellent Class

Coach Mike Dubose entered his second recruiting season looking squarely at a major crisis in his dream job at BAMA. The effects of two small recruiting classes in 1995 and 1996 due to NCAA sanctions were now being felt as very few upperclassmen were on the roster to provide leadership and experience. The 1997 class, which was Dubose first, was very crucial to the rebuilding process and was already showing signs of weak links. After only one year several players, key signees on top of that, had left the program already. The 1998 class was now a challenge to avoid disaster. With the need for immediate help at not only one position, but several, junior college players were needed and a priority of this year's class. Also, for the second straight year Coach Dubose and staff were able to use the recruiting offer all big-time prospects like to hear ... "immediate playing time" ! In 1997 this didn't seem to help pull any surprises, but the 1998 class had several signees admit it played in their decision. This year, 1998, the "blue-chips" signed with BAMA in large numbers.

Due to several prospects having marginal grades, BAMA signed 30 players with a plan to take the first 25 that qualified and the other five would have to wait a year or walk on. The numbers did work out and the plan turned out to be a success. Signing day was an exciting day as the long list of blue-chip commitments became BAMA signees. Two signees didn't qualify. ATH Damien Jones and LB Aries Monroe fell short academically with Monroe going on to junior college and Jones a big baseball prospect. Big JC nose guard Mario Monds also didn't make the necessary grades in junior college. TE Johnovan Morgan will walk on. JC OL Todd Whitmore is already in school and counts against this class.

This class now becomes my highest rated incoming class since I started in 1980. It's 4.3 \*(Excellent) rating surpasses the four 4.1 \*(Good) classes of Coach Stallings in 1991, 1993, 1994, and 1995. It's the first class to achieve an excellent incoming rating from my rating system. The 25 signees were as impressive as any ever signed by BAMA with the National media proclaiming it a top 5 class. An amazing 13 signees were "5" rated which is 52% of the class. Overall 20 of 25 signees were "4" rated or higher which is 80% ( I consider 60% very good). Four of the signees are JC players and all come in with impressive JC careers and will hopefully be impact players.

The group of "5" rated signees is impressive and most were sought after by the SEC powers such FL and TN. QB Tyler Watts comes in with great physical ability and outstanding leadership qualities after a great career at Pelham. Skill positions need outstanding players for team success and BAMA got several. WR Freddie Milons and WR Eric Locke give BAMA two small but explosive wide outs. Both are top players in the South and were part of some tough recruiting battles before signing day. OL signees Marico Portis, Bart Raulston, and Kenric Lott are all big highly rated linemen. JC Kenric Lott is counted on for immediate help. On the defensive side JC DL Cornelius Griffin is

expected to contribute immediately and has all-star potential. DE Kindal Morehead from Memphis is a prize recruit and continues our pipeline to talent rich Memphis. LB Marvin Constant comes in a physical specimen already and a true middle LB. LB Darius Gilbert is a big LB that could contribute as a DE during his career. JC LB Miguel Merritt is an outstanding JC player who could even play SS. The defensive backfield will get help from DB Reggie Myles and DB Shontua Ray who are both outstanding athletes. Myles is a highly rated prospect with big-time potential.

Other signees of mention are WR Sam Collins, a possession type receiver with great hands. FB Marvin Brown is a bullish blocker and runner and keeps our FB position strong. RB Ahmaad Galloway is a great running back prospect but could still play on the defensive side at safety. TE Terry Jones, Jr. keeps the family ties strong as he follows dad to BAMA. The strength coach hopes to watch his son excel with Terry, Jr. having outstanding potential. DE Canary Knight is a JC player who has great physical tools but may need more size to help at that position.

The one item that jumps out from this class besides having numerous highly rated signees is the talent is spread out and almost every position got some help from the class. You hope you fill your needs each year and this class will help. But, we are still very thin in numbers on the offensive line and need at least 2 more classes of this quality or better to climb back to the elite group of the SEC. As always, we'll know in 4-5 years if this great incoming class leaves it's mark on BAMA.

Class list is on the following page .....

1998 Class - Coach Mike Dubose						
Name	Pos.	ST.	Incoming Rating	Outgoing Rating	Honors	NFL
Lanis Baxley	OL	GA	3			
Marvin Brown	FB	MY	4			
Sam Collins	WR	AL	4			
Marvin Constant	LB	AL	5			
Victor Ellis	LB	TN	3			
Ahamad Galloway	RB	TN	4			
Darius Gilbert	LB	AL	5			
Cornelius Griffin JC	DL	MS	5			
Terry Jones, Jr.	TE	AL	4			
Canary Knight JC	DE	CA	4			
Eric Locke	WR	TN	5			
Kenric Lott JC	OL	MS	5			
Ray Marshall	OL	AL	3			
Miguel Merritt JC	SS	CA	5			
Freddie Milons	WR	MS	5			
Kindal Moorehead	DE	TN	5			
Reggie Myles	DB	MS	5			
Marico Portis	OL	AL	5			
Bart Raulston	OL	AL	5			
Shontua Ray	RB	AL	5			
Derek Sanders	DL	GA	4			
Theo Sanders	LB	AL	4			
Luke Tucker	QB	AL	3			
Tyler Watts	QB	AL	5			
Phillip Weeks	DB	FL	3			
Todd Witmore	OL	MS	4			
Non-Qualifiers						
Damien Jones	ATH	AL				
Mario Monds	DL	KS				
Aries Monore	LB	FL				
Walk On						
Johnovan Morgan	TE	FL				
Overall			4.3			

Incoming Class Rating System

3.6 – Less.....Poor

3.7 – 3.9.....Average

4.0 - 4.1 .....Good

4.2 – Above .....Excellent