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New Commit Adams Not a Typical Snapper

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Greenway (Phoenix, Ariz.) HS long snapper Nate Adams received a full ride from the University of Maryland and subsequently committed. And it's safe to say Adams isn't your everyday snapper.

Nate Adams has a funny story to tell about how he began his career of squatting over oblong balls and thrusting them 15 yards between his legs. See, when Adams, now a senior at Greenway (Phoenix, Ariz.) HS, was in sixth grade he had just starting playing football and really had no idea what a long snapper even was.

But one day, the story goes, his father sent him and his older brothers to a renowned trainer in Arizona, Ben Bernard, who happened to specialize in snapping. After a casual conversation, Bernard, whose organization is called Arizona Elite Longsnapping, asked Adams if he wanted to give his camp a try -- you know, just for the heck of it.

"I thought it was some one-day thing," said Adams, who become Maryland's 15th verbal commitment today. "So I said, 'Yeah, I'll try it out.'"

Little did he know it was a weekly camp held at one of the local high schools, where snappers from all around Arizona, at the high school, college and even pro levels, came to hone their craft.

"So I just got in the habit of doing this camp and then doing my own training every day since sixth grade," Adams said. "I made a commitment to it, and I didn't even know what it was (laughs). I guess it paid off, too. I mean, I'm getting my college education paid for because of it."

Indeed he is. Just a couple days after taking an official visit to College Park, Md., the 6-foot-2, 220-pound Adams gave Maryland head coach Randy Edsall a solid verbal, citing the coaching staff, the current players and Maryland's academics as primary reasons he chose the Terps. Adams also held a Division I offer from Air Force and had been receiving looks from Stanford, Arizona State, Washington State and several other Pac-12 programs.

"The combination of coaches, players and the fact that Maryland offers one of the best educations in the country all played into it," Adams said. "But also, the system Maryland runs for punts, that attracted me too since I believe [the UMD coaches] can help me get to the NFL as a long snapper."

It's an ambitious goal to say the least. Very few long snappers ever receive a full ride to the Division I level. And even fewer have successful enough careers to eventually earn paychecks at football's top level.

But Adams is no typical long snapper. And oh, by the way, don't ever label him as a "teams" guy. He's a football player first -- and don't you forget it.

"I think what separates me from most snappers is that I'm not just some guy they drag out there to snap the ball," said Adams, who boasts a 515-pound squat, a 300 bench and 315 clean. "I play linebacker too and have an offer for [that position] as well. And actually I set the school record this year with 101 tackles, so I'm an athlete.

"I'm not going to just stand around after I snap the ball and not make a play downfield; I'm not going to miss a block. I'm going to be the guy who not only contributes on special teams, but is a leader in the weight room and is going to set an example. I have a good work ethic and I want to get better."

OK, sure, but how much work does it really take to become a good snapper? It can't nearly be as difficult as, say, mastering the MIKE linebacker position or learning how to perfect routes as a receiver.

Can it?

Well, maybe not *that* difficult, but "you have to have the work ethic and you have to get the timing down pat, and you have to be mentally tough," Adams said. "People think, 'Oh yeah, I can do that,' but it's not as easy as it

looks. It takes a lot of practice, and you really have to be in the right mindset. I mean, when you're snapping for a pressure field goal, you can't be thinking, 'Oh, what if I mess up?' You have to be mentally ready to snap under any condition."

Including all types of weather. Many a long snapper have folded in the wind and rain, the ball slipping out of their hands or sailing the pigskin a bit too high. Adams, for his part, said he played one game in the rain earlier this year, and he's been to camps where it's been hailing.

"I haven't done anything wrong yet," he said, chuckling. "If your name gets mentioned as a snapper you're not doing a good job, and so far I haven't heard my name except as a linebacker. I'd like to keep it that way (laughs)."

If Adams continues to hear silence after every snap, he believes his career could end up in the NFL. Maryland, for its part, has sent long snappers to the League, headlined by [Jon Condo](#), a nine-year veteran for the Cowboys, Patriots and now the Raiders.

"One of the reasons I committed to Maryland was they run a pro-style punt formation," Adams said. "That will help me transition to the NFL. Most people won't notice this, but long snappers who go into a spread punt system have a hard time making it at the next level because they're not trained that way. But Maryland runs the pro system, so that really made [the Terps] stand out as well."

Sure, the punt formation may have played a role in Adams' choosing UMD, but really, it was the visit Dec. 13-15 that sold him. He said he "had a blast" on his official and called it "super fun" to meet the seven other commitments on campus and all the coaches. His host, former long snapper [Greg Parcher](#), showed him around, and the rest of the Terps were all "pretty cool guys." Adams enjoyed eating at Ruth's Chris on Friday night, hanging out in the dorms and seeing the Terps practice at the Washington Redskins' bubble Dec. 14. But the best part ...

"Was definitely getting the offer on [Dec. 15]," Adams said. "I was kind of expecting it because Coach [Andre] Powell and the Maryland coaches came out and had dinner with my family earlier. [Powell] saw me snap and watched a workout, and I performed well. So on the last day [of the official], I went to Coach [Randy] Edsall's office and he was just asking me what I thought about Maryland. And then he offered me. I was just so happy, and I thanked him for the opportunity."

Adams did not commit on the spot, however, instead returning to his Phoenix home in order to discuss the situation with his parents. His father, Phil, wanted to make sure his son was OK with the weather adjustment since Adams spends most of his days in the Arizona heat (verdict: Adams didn't mind the cold or the snow). His mother, meanwhile, wasn't so sure Adams should attend college some 2,000-plus miles away (verdict: the chance to play BCS football on a full ride made up for the distance concerns).

But, really, though it took him a couple extra days to make "the call," Adams knew he'd be a Terp all along.

"I loved the campus, the coaches and the people I got to meet. They have a great football program, they're going to the Big Ten, and academically I want to go into business, and Maryland has a great business school. There's a lot of plusses there," Adams said. "All the connections they have with Under Armour and all the other internships you can pick up, it provides you with the foundation you need to start your life after college."

Business may lie in Adams' future, but first he has his football ambitions to pursue. Who knows, in four or five years he could be another Jon Condo.

"That's the dream," Adams said. "That's what I've been working towards since I started snapping in sixth grade.

"Every day I'm going to work for it, you can count on that."