



## D1 Chattanooga's combine can help football prospects

Thursday, July 5, 2007

By Stephen Hargis

Assistant Sports Editor

For the last two weeks, high school football coaches throughout Tennessee have enjoyed a little time away from overseeing practice and preparations for the rapidly approaching season. Whether it's considered the calm before the storm or simply much needed therapy from fumbling freshmen, it is their last gasp before summer workouts lead to July 30, the first day of practice in pads.

But while coaches are catching up on their honey-do lists or simply catching some rays, most of the players barely slowed their pace these last few weeks. Certainly not to the point of calling this point of the summer a "dead" period.

Whether a player is hoping to catch recruiters' eyes or simply make this season a little more productive, there are plenty of camps and skill combines to choose from, including the one being held Saturday at D1 Sports Training. The first 100 players to register on [www.prechamps.com](http://www.prechamps.com) receive free admission to the camp, which begins at 10 a.m. and will include a variety of agility drills that will be videotaped and can be mailed to the participants' top college choices.

"It's a chance for the kid to go through a full day's combine and see what he needs to work on," said Cos DeMatteo, the D1 Chattanooga facility coordinator and a former University of Tennessee at Chattanooga star at quarterback and receiver. "This has become the thing to do for kids to test themselves and get their name out there.

"I never was a great tester, so it was probably better that I never went to one of these, but a lot of scouts want to see video or have 40 times or how much a kid can lift.

"Greenville (S.C.) hosted an Elite Combine in June, and it was a success for everybody. We're thrilled to provide our new state-of-the-art facility to assist Chattanooga-area high school athletes in their quest to play at the next level."

Trey Thompson established his name among college prospects last season when he rewrote every passing record at Marion County, becoming an all-state quarterback. He has already attended one position camp this summer and will likely be among those at Saturday's D1 combine.

"Mostly I just want to work on technique and get better for my team and learn all I can," Thompson said. "I don't worry much about the recruiting part. Hopefully the season will take care of that."

Most prep teams will reconvene Monday for summer practice, adjust to the heat for two weeks and then begin practice for the 2007 season in earnest at the end of the month. That leaves precious little time for rising juniors and seniors to get their names in the minds of college coaches.

One area athlete who has already solidified his standing as a top-notch prospect at two camps is North Jackson junior linebacker Tana Patrick. The 6-foot-3, 223-pound Patrick has attended camps at the University of Georgia and Auburn and will be at Alabama's camp later this month. At Auburn, coaches reported back to Chiefs coach Mark Rose that of the 500 attendees, Patrick was "the best linebacker prospect at the camp."

"They said it wasn't even close," Rose said. "Obviously kids have to back up whatever they do now once the season starts. But the summer camps can be a great way of getting your name out there."

E-mail Stephen Hargis at [shargis@timesfreepress.com](mailto:shargis@timesfreepress.com)

Subscribe Here!

Tips for pruning shrubs