



Bartholomew ready to make a name for himself

By Josh Ward

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Ben Bartholomew shouldn't be scared when he steps on a college football field for the first time.

The 6-foot-3, 235-pound fullback/linebacker from Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville signed a national letter of intent to play football at Tennessee in February.

Bartholomew, brother of former UT fullback Will Bartholomew, has spent the last few months training at his brother's workout facility, D1 Sports Training in Nashville.

Ben Bartholomew said his training experience has helped prepare him for when he enrolls in UT's second session of summer school on July 7.

Bartholomew talks about his goals at UT and trying to step out of Will's shadow in this Q&A.

Q: What was your most memorable moment from your official visit to UT?

A: My official visit was a little different than most people. On the way to Knoxville I had some bad Wendy's and got food poisoning. The food was great but I was just kind of sick so I didn't go out. I enjoyed seeing the facilities I hadn't seen before. The most memorable thing was the Thornton Center, seeing how well they treat the athletes academically, making sure they're doing the right thing in the classroom and making the grades they need to.

Q: You ended the recruiting process early. How did that help you?

A: It helped a lot on the field. I got to relax a lot more. I was not worried about making big plays every play and I focused on just doing my job. I was a lot looser. It was a great comfort to have. For any high school student, your college choice is hard. It's great to know where you're going and to get the college process out of the way.

Q: Who has made the most significant influence on your football career?

A: I'd say my brother, Will. I started working out with him at D1 in the seventh grade. I think with my game the most powerful impact has got to be him. He and D1 are really responsible for all the gains I've had physically as well as on the field. Not to put down my coaches. I've had great coaches who've helped a lot. I'd say my brother was the most influential.

Q: How has he helped you with the transition from high school to college?

A: He put together a group of guys at D1 playing at the next level in my class. I've been working out at D1 all spring and this summer to get ready. He was bringing in college guys who've been there and done that. They were kind of coming and talking to me as well as him telling me what to expect and where I need to be physically.

Q: When you think back to Will's career, what do you remember?

A: I remember the national championship game, him going in and getting his helmet knocked off by some linebacker. It was kind of a wakeup call. My best memory when he was at UT was when they won by two points at Florida (34-32 in 2001). He got up on a stand and led the band singing "Rocky Top" after the game. It was great.

Q: When did you know you would have a future in football?

A: I think it's always been my dream to play at Tennessee ever since Will did. Ever since I was like 6 years old. After my sophomore year, that football season I knew it'd be a big thing. Coming out starting as a sophomore at linebacker was a pretty big deal. That kind of made colleges start to look my way.

Q: What is your favorite part about playing football?

A: The contact, definitely. Either hitting someone on their back on a block or tackling them and knocking them on their back carrying the football. I love contact. I don't like sports without it. I don't know. It's just what I'm all about. It will help me going in (to college). I feel like people go in kind of scared because they're not used to the size and speed. I feel like I won't be scared. Because of D1, I have good size on me.

Q: What will it mean to you to represent your home state?

A: It's awesome. I'm really excited. There's no other place I want to be. It would not feel like home anywhere else. I've grown up on Neyland Stadium. That's all I know. It's an honor to represent my home state.

Q: What are your goals at UT?

A: Make my own name for myself and not be known as Will's brother. That'd be a big goal. Just be a standout player. It's hard to say I want to come in and start my freshman year because you don't know what the situation will be like. A goal is definitely to start and move on to have a future in the NFL but definitely be an impact player.

Q: What will you have to do to not just be known as "Will's brother"?

A: I think being a standout player if I play fullback and not just be a blocking fullback -- maybe a route-running fullback or a fullback who could carry the ball more than he did. Being that kind of player definitely would make a new name for myself.

Q: Your teammate at MBA, UT signee Preston Bailey, said the Vols are overdue for a national championship. What do you think?

A: That is 100 percent my goal as well. We talk about it. My grandfather was at UT when they won the national championship. My brother was at Tennessee when they won it. I want to help bring another

one. We've talked about it all our high school career. We went undefeated and won (the state championship) last year. We want to take that energy and bring it to UT.



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