

Akey pleased with 2009 recruiting class

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It was a productive morning today for the Idaho football team.

By 10 a.m. 16 players had officially signed to play football for the Vandals, and more are expected to file throughout the day.

“This class, we increase team speed, which is very important and we were able to take care of (some) depth at quarterback,” Idaho coach Robb Akey said. “We were able to increase the speed level and we addressed some depth at linebacker. We also added another pass rusher or two.”

The Vandals look throughout the country for players, but Akey said a quarter of the class signed is from the Pacific Northwest.

“We’ve got two of the best players from Idaho and four players from Washington — our area,” Akey said. “That means we’re taking care of our homeland very well. And we’re going to stretch it.”

Idaho has signed two junior college transfer players, and Akey said he expects three more to send in their letters today.

“I still want guys with us a long period of time,” he said. “And two of these guys (JC transfers) will be with us three years.” Tavita Halaholo is one JC transfer that Akey expects to help with the depleted offensive line.

Halaholo is 6-foot-5, 358 pounds and was a first-team JC Grid-Wire All American from the College of San Mateo.

“He’s a big cat you can put with the o-line,” Akey said.

Akey also recruited JC quarterback Brian Reader, a 6-3, 220-pound thrower from Monterey (Calif.) Peninsula Junior College.

“We’ll have three quarterbacks competing with each other,” Akey said. “We had two quarterbacks last year with Nate (Enderle) and Justin (Moralas), and we need to have more buys around than that. I have a lot of confidence in Nate, we just need more depth.”

The Vandals also have signed a handful of high school players from California, two from Texas, two from Arizona, one from South Carolina and one expected to sign from Hawaii.

“These are the guys we went after and we wanted,” Akey said. “We’re not settling. We attracted guys who believe in what we’re building here. All but one comes from a winning team and have experienced postseason play — things were are working on. This class will stretch from Hawaii to the other coast.”

Idaho also has signed two players from Arizona, Vince Keener and Taylor Davis and Denzell Wedgeworth of South Carolina.

Akey will be at the University Inn-Best Western in Moscow today at 5 p.m. to meet with Vandal fans and in Lewiston at the Red Lion at 7 p.m.

2009 recruits Jeffrey Bediako, LB, 6-3, 228 Boise High School Boise, Idaho/Amsterdam, The Netherlands First-team all-Southern Idaho Conference, 38 tackles, two quarterback hurries, one pass deflection. 4.46 40, also played tight end. Played at Boise High after moving to Idaho from Amsterdam, The Netherlands, as a high school senior. At the time of his commitment to the Vandals, Boise High School coach Bob Clark told the media, “He takes a lot of athleticism to Idaho. His east-west speed on the field is great and he’ll add a lot to their defense. I think two or three years from now, he’ll be a very special football player, because right now he’s still learning the game.”

Jared Heston, LB, 6-1, 220 Lake City High School Coeur d’Alene, Idaho Inland Empire League Defensive Player of the Year ... All-Idaho first-team linebacker ... senior-team all-IEL running back ... all-North Idaho first-team defense ... as a senior, had 85 tackles, five tackles for loss, three sacks, three pass deflections and eight QB hurries ... two-way starter as a senior and junior ... also punted and was team’s placekicker ... as a junior, earned first-team All-North Idaho on defense ... No. 5 overall prospect in Idaho by Rivals.com ... after committing in August, he was quoted: “I really like it (at Idaho). It just feels like home being so close by and everything.” ... coach Van Troxel said in a newspaper interview: “We’ve had some great linebackers, but I’d rank Jared at the top. Whether it’s in games or practice, he steps up and whacks people. He’s what a linebacker is supposed to be. ... We rely on him to be our defensive leader. On offense he’s kind of become our glue. When things need to be settled down offensively, we go to Jared. ... I’m really excited for him (to go to Idaho), because I think it’s a great fit. He’ll have an opportunity to get out there and play.” as a youngster, he set the national age-group record (10-under) in the 50-meter breaststroke (he gave up competitive swimming after his sophomore season because of time constraints ... the age-group record, set in 2001, still stands.

Tracy Carter DB, 5-11, 170 Madison High School Mesquite, Texas 11-3A First-team all-district cornerback as a senior and second team as a junior ... two year-starter at Madison High and three-year letterman. As a senior he had four interceptions and 15 passes defended ... also a standout track athlete ... on Madison’s 4x400 state championship team

... regional qualifier in the hurdles ... said coach Marcus Gates: “Tracy has an innate ability to make plays on the football. He’s very athletic and he’s very competitive. ... He won two games for us. He covered the best receivers and he shut them down. ... He makes plays on the football. You really can’t teach that. ... You’re getting a great kid – not only a great athlete but a great kid.”

Taylor Davis QB, 6-3, 191 Boulder Creek High School Anthem, Ariz. Northwest Region Offensive Player of the Year ... All-State selection ... first-team all region after throwing for 2,357 yards and 26 TDs ... completed 64 percent of his passes as a senior ... as a junior, threw for 855 yards and nine TDs ... as a junior, was second-team Northwest Region ... was in the final four of 48 original players from 17 states at the EA Sports Quarterback Camp at Las Vegas ... finished second in the accuracy competition at the EA camp ... the EA Sports Elite 11 recap had this: “Davis might be the top QB prospect in Arizona this class. ... has plus arm strength, a good setup and delivery and was obviously quite accurate all day long.” ... 2008 team, which was only in its third year of existence, advanced to second round of playoffs ... in a Web site article, he said: “When I took the visit, I verbalized to Idaho. ... The coaches were like family — they seemed liked they really cared. And the program just seemed really cool. I want to build the program.”

Taylor Elmo ATH, 6-3, 220 Eisenhower High School Yakima, Wash. Seattle Times Red Chip prospect ... honorable mention all-Big Nine quarterback as a senior ... all-league selection at linebacker as a sophomore ... starting quarterback at Eisenhower as a junior and senior ... also started at safety ... in two seasons, threw for 2,380 yards and 23 TDs ... also rushed for 1,631 yards and 16 TDs ... said Elmo after committing to the Vandals, “The whole setting seemed right for me. The school size is good, and the older players were real positive about the program.” ... Ron Siegel’s all-state senior team as a defensive back.

Aaron Grymes DB, 5-11, 170 West Seattle High School Seattle, Wash. As a junior, Metro Sound Division Offensive MVP after helping West Seattle High to Class 3A state-playoff qualifying round ... injured as a senior and missed middle part of season but came back to be part of West Seattle’s post-season play, which resulted in three playoff victories ... fifth as a junior in state 3A 100 meters with a 10.8 ... said coach Davis Lura in an earlier newspaper article: “He works his butt off in the weight room twice a day. ... His biggest strength is his football IQ. He understands all the pieces that are on the field. Most kids just understand what they’re supposed to do, but he gets it all.” ... originally committed to the University of Washington (de-committed in late January) ... 4.4 40 speed ... said Grimes in an article after choosing Idaho: “I feel like I have a knack for where the ball is — I can always find the ball and be the first on there. ... I definitely wanted to be somewhere where I felt wanted and where I was going to be able to play.” ... 3.70 grade-point average ... plans to major in Business ... 2008 University of Washington summer camp MVP.

Tevita Halaholo OL, 6-5, 358 College of San Mateo Mills High School Oakland, Calif. First Team JC Grid-Wire All-American, First Team CCC Football Coaches All-American, All-California Region 1, First Team preseason JC Gridwire All-American, and

First Team All Nor-Cal selection while leading the way for an enormously successful rushing attack ... born in Tonga and moved to U.S. as a toddler ... 2006 graduate of Oakland's Mills High School ... benches 350 and squats 450.

Clayton Homme TE, 6-5, 200 Southridge High School Kennewick, Wash. CBBN Columbia Division MVP as a senior ... played receiver and defensive back ... team was undefeated during the regular season ... Seattle Times Red Chip player ... Associated Press all-state honorable mention for class 4A ... as a junior, was first-team all-Columbia Basin League ... as a junior, had 27 receptions for 355 yards and eight TDs ... during the regular season of his senior year, had 37 receptions for 481 yards and five TDs ... had 610 total yards and six total TDs ... also has six interceptions and 30 tackles ... also plays basketball and baseball ... said coach Andy Troxel in an earlier article: "Clayton is a great young man who has worked very hard on and off the field to get to where he is at. He will have a great opportunity at Idaho to play and get a quality education." ... said Homme after his visit to Idaho: "I like the campus a lot. I'm from a small town myself, and it's kinda got that small town atmosphere. It's not too big, but it's not too small. I think I'll fit in great there."

Jordan Johnson OL, 6-5, 306 Santiago High School Corona, Calif. All Big Eight first team ... All-Riverside County first team ... Press-Enterprise all-area team ... first-team all-California Interscholastic Federation Inland Division ... all-CIF Southern Section ... started 26 successive games ... two-year starter ... team captain ... benches 335 and completed 43 reps at 225 pounds in the power clean ... Jordan said the graduation in Idaho's offensive line provides an early playing possibility and the School of Business is appealing.

Vince Keener DE, 6-4, 220 Westview High School Avondale, Ariz. As a senior, earned all-Arizona recognition during Westview's run to its second successive state championship game appearance ... also a two-time selection to the all-West Phoenix Region and an all-West Valley honoree ... was listed among the top 50 in Arizona in 24/7 magazine ... as a senior, had 108 tackles (fifth all-time at Westview) , five sacks (third all-time at Westview), 15 tackles for loss and 16 QB hurries ... as a junior, second-team all-region after registering 87 tackles, 17 QB hurries and 3.5 sacks.

Brian Reader QB, 6-3, 220 Monterey Peninsula JC Palma High School Salinas, Calif. As a freshman at MPC, threw for 2,500 yards and 20 TDs in leading the Lobos to a 10-0 regular-season record and Coast Conference title ... earned Coast Conference Player of the Year honors and was an all-Region II choice ... played in the Junior College All-American game ... out of high school, redshirted for one season at Arkansas before transferring to Monterey Peninsula ... he told the Monterey County Herald, "I believe the area fits the person who I am. I love the outdoors. ... I fit (Idaho's) system with naked bootlegs and rollouts. ... I'm not a city person. It's a college town. I like people know who you are. It's a good change from what I've seen in the past." ... at Palma High School, he started only one year but broke several school records in passing for 2,411 yards and 19 TDs as he completed 64 percent of his passes ... Tri-County Athletic League MVP and All-League quarterback ... on the Monterey County Herald All-

Monterey County Football team and was chosen by the Salinas Californian as the Monterey County Offensive Player of the Year.

Kyle Salm OL, 6-6, 273 San Dimas High School San Dimas, California All-California Interscholastic Federation Mid-Valley Division first team ... all-Inland Valley first team ... all-Valle Vista League first team ... Gabriel Valley Tribune all-area first team ... blocked in an offense that averaged 341 rushing yards per game ... 4.2 grade-point average ... said coach Bill Zernickow, “He’s been healthy and dominant.”

Michael Terry LB, 6-1, 225 Angleton High School Rosharon, Texas Team captain ... started at defensive end and used frequently as a “power” running back ... earned District 24-4A first team honors as well as honorable mention 4A all-state recognition ... Once he committed to the Vandals, Terry described his trip and prospects in an online story. “I loved it. It felt like family down there, and the coaches made me feel wanted. I like how the whole town was about football. Everybody down there, in all the windows, you see the “Go Vandals” and stuff. I like that, the support from the town.”

Justin Veltung WR, 5-11, 175 Puyallup High School Puyallup, Wash. As a senior, was first team all-South Puget Sound League as a receiver, defensive back and kick returner ... SPSL Special Teams Player of the Year as a junior and senior ... Tacoma News Tribune all-area return specialist ... had 19 receptions for 481 yards and 944 all-purpose yards despite missing part of the season with injury ... also, all-state selection and SPSL MVP as a soccer forward ... ran track as a freshman (10.8 100) and plans to run it again this spring ... recorded a 4.39 40 – the best time at the Spanaway Competitive Edge Combine ... said his coach Tom Ingles: “Any time he has the ball in his hands, he’s got the speed to outrun anyone on the field. ... Justin is an incredible athlete. He runs extremely well, has great balance, great hands.”

Gary Walker S, 6-0, 190 Redlands East Valley Redlands, Calif. Two-way starter as a senior ... all-California Interscholastic League Inland Division selection at defensive back ... also played receiver ... as a senior, had 464 yards receiving on 27 receptions and scored four touchdowns; 71 tackles, four interceptions (two for TDs); returned three punts for TDs, and carried the ball 42 times for 294 yards and one TD ... as a junior, 22 receptions for 302 yards and three TDs; 88 tackles and three interceptions; averaged 22.1 yards per punt return; had 42 carries for 381 yards and four TDs; 8-for 17 passing for 238 yards and eight TDs ... REV MVP as a junior and senior ... also team captain as a junior and senior and led team in interceptions both years ... high school teammate of Idaho linebacker Andre Ferguson ... of his decision and his trip to Moscow, Walker was quoted as saying: “I really enjoyed myself while I was out there. I really liked the coaches along with the players, so I could see myself out there and playing for coach Akey. That’s how I made my decision. ... I liked the weight room — the weight room to me is really important, to have a nice weight room; so that really caught my attention. I could see myself working out in there. And I liked the big dome, the Kibbie Dome was great. It was really nice.”

Denzell Wedgeworth WR, 5-10 190 Hemingway High School Hemingway, S.C. Three-time all-state selection ... two-time all-Pee Dee choice ... three-time all-region player ... WPDE-TV Player of the Week twice — after games against Johnsonville and Carvers Bay ... Hemingway MVP three years ... during his career, accounted for 2,507 yards rushing and 28 rushing TDs; 3, 072 yards passing and 26 TDs; 557 yards receiving and three TD receptions, and 64 tackles and seven interceptions (three returned for TDs) defensively.

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