

# Keep An Eye On Phillips

By Roy Exum

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Kyle Phillips, a promising 6-foot-4, 255-pound junior at Nashville's Hillsboro High School, has already gotten dozens of scholarship offers and is being so heavily recruited nobody know the last time he was home for the weekend. But if Phillips, who plays defensive end, does not go to Tennessee his proud grandfather is claiming he may have to sell his house on Lookout Mountain.

Reuben Lawrence, a giant of a man who helped mold Howard High School into what it is today and was a much-beloved ambassador for Beasley Distributing Company before he retired, is so proud of Kyle he's about to pop and said he can hardly believe the amount of attention the standout athlete is drawing. Then again, Reuben is hardly a newcomer to watching a super star emerge.

His daughter, Teresa, was an all-state basketball star at GPS before earning all-SEC honors at Vanderbilt. Highly successful as a college coach and already honored by a number of Halls of Fame, she is now the athletic director at Tennessee State but she realizes her son is destined to play on a bigger stage. And as of last week, Kyle had offers from 11 SEC schools, as well as offers from defending national champion Florida State, Clemson, Penn State, Stanford, and Ohio State, just to name a few.

"I'm sure his mother could put in a word for him if he wanted to play for TSU," Reuben said the other day, "but I imagine he could pick just about anywhere he wants to go. Personally I'd like to see him follow in the footsteps of Reggie White in Knoxville but Teresa has been really straight with him. She wants him to make up his mind and they don't need any coaching from me," he grinned.

Kyle has great size and speed but what makes recruiters squirm is the fact Teresa has stressed "a good name is better than great riches" in both Kyle and his brother Micah. Majoring in economics at Vanderbilt, she has "coached" her blue-chip son to a lofty 3.8 grade-point average.

Craig Clayton, his coach at Hillsboro, said it well in a recent story that appeared in the Nashville Tennessean: "He's got a solid family. His mom's a great lady. He's a great kid. (College recruiters) love those intangibles. They are looking for kids with character and that makes Kyle very viable."

Asked where he is considering, Kyle won't say, other than he has a list of his Top Ten. "These are the schools I'm trying to focus on (note the alphabetical order): Alabama, Auburn, Florida,

Florida State, Georgia, LSU, Ohio State, Ole Miss, Stanford and Tennessee. Clemson may be in there over Florida right now. Hopefully I can get (the recruiting process) over by the start of the season or midway through it.”

Shoulder surgery kept him off the field for the majority of his junior year but his size, speed and strength caused coaches to come by regularly. Recently he attended Alabama’s spring game and has gotten to know Nick Saban quite well. “Teresa and Kyle were both impressed by the traditions at Alabama, and got a kick out of watching this year’s captains cast their hands in concrete like Alabama has done for years.”

“Tennessee has worked awfully hard – and very well – recruiting Kyle but all of the schools have stayed on him. He’s having a wonderful experience,” said his grandfather. “Where ever he winds up is where I’ll be on Saturday ... as long as it’s not out-of-state,” Reuben laughed again. “No, he knows we’re with him anywhere he decides to go.”

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The libertarian think tank Cato Institute has released a scathing report that shows welfare pays more than minimum wage workers earn in 35 states and 13 of those states pay a rate that would be over \$15 an hour. Right now the federal minimum wage is \$7.25, which the Obama administration is trying to raise to \$9.00. “No one who works full time should be living in poverty,” said the President.

The report states that nine states pay more to welfare recipients than a first-year school teachers earn and the six richest states pay more than the starting wage for a computer programmer.

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The education group America’s Promise Alliance just reported that 87 percent of high school seniors in Tennessee graduated in 2012 and believes that figure will rise to 90 percent by 2020.

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A very potent painkiller, Zohydro ER, has been approved but the Attorney Generals in 29 states are asking the Food and Drug Administration to rethink allowing the powerful drug. There were over 38,000 deaths from prescription drug overdoses in 2010 and 420,000 other Americans were treated in emergency rooms

State and local police are calling prescription drugs their biggest safety problem and Zohydro – pure hydrocodone – is five times stronger than comparable doses of commonly used drugs like Vicodin and Lortab.

While Zohydro’s manufacturer states it is solely for patients with chronic pain, drug enforcement officials are scared abusers will snort it or inject it, both potentially lethal.

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Joe Maddon, the manager of the Tampa Bay Rays, couldn't resist himself after Yankee pitcher Michael Pineda got a 10-day suspension from Major League Baseball for using pine tar to doctor his pitches. "I'm in favor of legalizing pine tar but its usage may have to start with the Rockies and Mariners." (In Denver and Seattle marijuana use is legal.)