

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Central High School's Akil Emanuel Signs Football Contract With Mesabi Range College In Minnesota

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ST. CROIX -- St. Croix Central High School (CHS) senior Akil Emanuel signed a letter of intent on May 18 to play football at Mesabi Range College in Virginia, Minn. During the momentous occasion held in the CHS library, Emanuel celebrated the by his milestone surrounded mother, coaches and supporters.

A defensive tackle on the 2016-2017 Caribs football team, which finished the season as the St. Croix District champions, Emanuel plans to study mechanical engineering at the junior college in hopes of transferring to a larger state school to play in the NCAA and complete a four-year degree.

"I have a love for football, but education will always come first," he said. "I plan to use my skill on the field to help take me further in my studies."

Emanuel's recruitment is a result of the 9th annual Virgin Islands High School Football Showcase held at the Charlotte Amalie High School, facilitated by coach, Francisco Jarvis. More than twenty players from Central High School and St. Croix Educational Complex (SCEC) participated in the showcase, where Greg Medeck, coach at Central Lakes College in Minnesota, observed 35 of the top high school football players in the Virgin Islands.

Parent and "coach mom" Kemba Martin, who helped coordinate the students' travel to St. Thomas for the showcase, expressed her excitement in Emanuel's college football pursuit.

"I am so happy for Akil and proud of all of my players," she said. "They worked very hard this year, secured the championship and approached the game with an open mind."

Martin went on to say that although Emanuel began playing later in his high school career, as a junior, "he has the talent and he put in overtime, and proved that he could excel at football. I have no doubts that he will do well in college."

Emanuel's mother and fellow "coach mom" Ena Hansen revealed how she agreed to let her son to play college football.

"At first, I looked at colleges for their academic curriculum. He [Akil] has a 3.5 GPA, so he was accepted to and offered scholarships to several schools," explained Hansen. "After participating in the clinics, he became interested in playing college football. We had a verbal contract that said once your grades are good, you can play sports and I did my research, so I thought he deserved it."

Caribs Head Coach Kevin Dowdye is proud of his players, and credits their hard work on and off the field for their accomplishments.

"I'm very proud. They love the sport, I love the sport and they love being on the field," said Dowdye. "This is a direct result of the combine and showcase in March and with the help of the coach moms, we're going to keep on pushing. This is only the beginning for our players. A huge congratulations to Mr. Emanuel."

Assistant Principal Henry Mark also attended the signing and gave congratulatory remarks to Emanuel on his achievement.

A total of five players from St. Croix will play football at colleges in Minnesota. Amani Flores of SCEC will also attend Mesabi Range College. Jakeem Auguste of CHS and Le'Joni Williams of SCEC will attend Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Fergus Falls, Minn. SCEC's Vernon Clarke will attend Central Lakes College in Brainerd, Minn.

Feature Image: Akil and mother Ena Hansen. (Credit: D.O.E.)

