

FUMA alumni Hackenberg declaring for NFL draft

Christian Hackenberg made it official following Penn State's appearance in the TaxSlayer Bowl: he is declaring for the NFL draft in 2016.

Hackenberg will join fellow Fork Union Military Academy alumnus Cardale Jones of Ohio State as a potential first round quarterback pick in the draft that begins April 28. Wide receiver Mike Thomas, Jones' teammate at Ohio State and his roommate during their postgraduate year together at Fork Union Military Academy, has not made his decision at this time whether to return to Ohio State for his senior season, or declare for the NFL draft himself.

Hackenberg was highly recruited during his time at Fork Union Military Academy and received scholarship offers from many top programs. The coach of then national champion Alabama, Nick Saban, even paid a visit to Fork Union to take a personal look at his top prospect.

Hackenberg passed on Alabama and other powerhouse programs, however, when he announced his decision to play for Penn State and its new head coach Bill O'Brien in February of his junior year. Then came the news of the harsh NCAA sanctions being levied against Penn State in the wake of the Sandusky scandal. Hackenberg never wavered in his commitment to the program, however. Even when his head coach Bill O'Brien left for the NFL just seven months after Hackenberg's arrival, he stayed with the program. Although his college career has been far from perfect at Penn State, his presence has always made the team competitive and has helped the team recruit other top prospects. In a recent article posted on the ESPN website, sportswriter Josh Moyer described Hackenberg as the quarterback who helped save the Penn State football program following the unprecedented NCAA sanctions.

Hackenberg's former coach at Fork Union, Micky Sullivan, rated the young quarterback at the top of his list. "Christian is not only an outstanding player, but, perhaps more importantly, he is a fine young man. It has been a pleasure to have had the opportunity to play a role in his development," he said. "He has been a credit to every team he has played for and because of his work ethic and character, he will continue to make any team he plays for better."