

2008 Play It Smart Signing Day Quotes from Atlanta Public School Student-Athletes

"I like the idea of having a program that connects academics with athletics. Sometimes it's really hard to balance everything. It took awhile for us to get to know Coach Brown but now she's like part of the team. We look for her whenever we have a school activity because we know she'll be there with her camera to take pictures of all the members of Play It Smart. She has helped me by being another person I can find when I need help. I think Play It Smart has brought us closer together as a team because we get a chance to work together on other things outside of football like community service projects and team building activities," said **LaQuentin Crumbley** who signed with **Fort Valley State** and participates in the **South Atlanta HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"Play It Smart is good for athletes. I remember it and my academic coach from my freshman and sophomore years. We had study hall in the theatre, and my academic coach caused me to stay focused on my classes even though I had no real problems in the classroom. Our coaches have been dedicated in keeping up with us and how we were doing academically. We did some community service like helping build a house with Habitat for Humanity," said **Artesza Portee** who signed with **Connecticut** and participates at **Benjamin E. Mays HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"Play It Smart study halls were a good thing to keep us focused on our books. Even though I did not struggle in the classroom, the focus Play It Smart put on studying early as a freshman helped me see early how important it was to study and keep my grades up. I particularly liked the life skills conferences we had sometimes doing study hall," said **Patrick Thomas** who signed with **Savannah State** and participates at **Benjamin E. Mays HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"Academically Play It Smart helped me to maintain my GPA above a 3.0, helping me continue my success as a student-athlete. Athletically it kept me disciplined and humbled. Socially I was able to help others by participating in the community projects our academic coach set up for us. My academic coach has helped me reach the next level of being prepared for college with my academic studies, helping make sure I do what I am suppose to be doing," said **Naquan Smith** who signed with **Grambling State** and participates at **Benjamin E. Mays HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"The program kept me on top of my books. My grades went up and I was able to focus better in the classroom. It definitely kept me eligible to compete on the field. [My academic coach] helped me with all my difficult work and all the assignments I struggled in," said **Daniel Few** who signed with **Georgia Southern** and participates at **Henry W. Grady HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"The program definitely helped me focus on my grades. By thinking in the classroom, I could think better on the field. Coach Yancey encouraged me to stay focus and do well," said **Jarvis Caffey** who signed with **Bethune Cookman College** and participates at **Henry W. Grady HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"The program gave me insight in how to prepare for college. Having to keep my grades up and be an athlete is a big part of the college experience, and I think that [Play It Smart] helped me understand that. [My academic coach] made sure I was straight in all my classes and made sure everything was ready for college," said **Brandon Outlaw** who signed with **North Carolina Central** and participates at **Henry W. Grady HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"The program helped me understand why my grades were so important. I was able to stay on top of my grade point average and increase it. Athletically, the program helped me because it let me get adjusted to demands that would be made in college so it won't be a surprise," said **DeMarcus Watts** who signed with **Georgia Southern** and participates at **Henry W. Grady HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"It gave me more time to do my work so my grades improved. I was able to give more of myself on the field because I wasn't tired from doing homework from last night. [Our academic coach] was constantly staying on top of us about our grades," said **Darryl Farley** who signed with **Tulane** and participates at **Henry W. Grady HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"I took my grades more seriously, and [my academic coach] knew stuff that maybe my parents or counselors didn't know about and gave me the information," said **Emmanuel Spragin** who signed with **Shorter College** and participates **at Henry W. Grady HS in Atlanta, Ga.**

"The program pushed me to excel in the classroom. I could just play and not worry about if I was in trouble with grades because I was doing what I had to with [my academic coach. She definitely made sure I was taking classes seriously. She was always open about anything we should know about," said **Jarrett Griffin**, who signed with **Valdosta State** and participates at **Henry W. Grady HS in Atlanta, Ga.**