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## FIVE UNDERRATED SUMMER COMMITMENTS

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2018 J'Raen Brooks



2018 Darius Bazley



2018 Rasir Bolton

Commitments prior to the end of the July evaluation period can be rare. With prospects generally looking to rack up all of their options before cutting things down and making a decision, programs can struggle to close the deal early. However, June, July, and early August featured a number of fireworks as some of the nation's top prospects and hidden gems came off the board. Here are five underrated summer commitments that will have a bigger impact on their future programs than the rankings may suggest.

### Darius Bazley – Syracuse

This probably doesn't fall under the "underrated" category anymore, but prior to his rise in the spring, Bazley was just that. Ohio State's loss is Syracuse's gain. The lanky, athletic forward is an excellent fit in Syracuse's 2-3 zone. The 6-foot-9 forward will close up passing lanes, get out to shooters in the corner and affect shots, and protect the rim inside. Jim Boeheim always seems to have bigs who play well in the high-low game. Bazley can catch at the high post, slash, and shoot the ball from anywhere on the floor. A big mismatch problem, Bazley will make a lot of bigs uncomfortable at the next level. He can pull forwards out of the paint, take them off the dribble, and possesses excellent body control at the rim.

### Rasir Bolton – Penn State

This is a great fit for Penn State. When you think of the Nittany Lions, they always have one of the best guards in the Big Ten that's just a thorn in the side of opponents -- Usually a go-to isolation scorer that can shoot PSU into games and allows them to pull off a few upsets throughout the Big Ten season. I can see Bolton being like a D.J. Newbill, Taylor Battle, Tim Frazier, etc. -- a guard that can take over, hit big shots, and when he gets hot, he'll stay hot. With the summer he had, Bolton was starting to pick up more quality offers. Credit the 6-foot-3 combo guard for making a good business decision. He'll likely be the centerpiece in PSU's 2018 recruiting class and is one of the better pickups for Pat Chambers during his tenure. Not only that, Bolton was a leader on one of the best AAU programs in the country, Team Loaded, and can help reshape the culture in Happy Valley.

### J'Raen Brooks – USC

Brooks is a sure-fire top 100 prospect, but I'm sold that he should be considered as one of the best power forwards in the country when you talk about all-around skill sets. Love the 2018 class USC has assembled, but to me, Brooks is their best pro prospect. This is a go-to, back-to-the-basket forward that the Trojans can isolate on the block and let him get to work in the half court. Brooks can also face up and shoot the ball effectively from 12-15 feet. It wouldn't be surprising if the 6-foot-8, 215-pound senior develops into a 3-point shooting threat either. Defensively, Brooks does the little things. He walls up, moves his feet, and his length makes it very difficult to score over him. Brooks will control the glass, block/alter shots, and has no problems doing the dirty work. Talent evaluators love the freak athlete, raw forwards who often never reach their ridiculously high ceilings. Brooks sits back in the 75-95 range in most national rankings, but there aren't 20 plus better power forwards in this 2018 class and Brooks still has plenty of untapped potential once he suits up as a Trojan.

### Spencer Freedman – Harvard

Remember this name come NCAA Tournament time when you're filling out your brackets in a few years. Bol and Shareef O'Neal get the headlines, but Spencer Freedman is the straw that stirs the drink for Cal Supreme. An elite decision maker, Freedman held a couple of Pac-12 offers. Put Freedman in the pick n' roll and he'll do the rest. The lefty is smooth off the bounce and a quick first step allows him to get to the rim. He uses excellent touch on his passes, particularly on his alley-oops where he allows his long, athletic forwards to go up and make plays near the rim. Freedman has a quick, effortless stroke from 3-point range and can be deadly from well beyond the arc. A poised floor general who's never in a rush even with against some of the best athletes in the country, Freedman's ability to simplify the game and compliment the players around him makes him very underrated nationally.



2018 Spencer Freedman



2018 Mitch Listau

### Mitch Listau – Belmont

I don't know if Listau will be a star at Belmont. What I do know, is even if he never plays a minute, the Bruins will be better just by having his presence in the locker room. A blue-collar that brings it every possession, Listau will rub off on his teammates and he's a guy they'll love to go to battle with. The top two-way player in the NY2LA Association, Listau filled a variety of roles for the Wisconsin Swing. He can take over the scoring load, distribute, stretch the floor with his shooting off the ball, and he's a terrific perimeter defender. The 6-foot-4 senior has the ability to be a stopper in the Ohio Valley Conference. Able to play on or off the ball, Listau appears skilled and mature enough to play immediately for Belmont.

*Note: Evan is a contributing editor for NY2LASPORTS.COM. He is also the football and basketball recruiting analyst for Badger247. Follow Evan on Twitter [@Evan\\_Flood](#).*

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