



VAUGHT'S VIEWS: Parcels impresses Boone

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Aaron Boone was certain he would be picked during the National Football League draft last weekend, but now he's also glad he wasn't drafted.

That's because he likes his chances of making the Dallas Cowboys, who gave him a signing bonus and a free-agent contract soon after the draft ended Sunday night.

"Things went well with Dallas," said Boone. "They gave me a nice signing bonus, probably more than most free agents get."

Perhaps that's because new Dallas coach Bill Parcels, who supposedly considered becoming the new UK coach in December after Guy Morriss left for Baylor, contacted Boone personally. Other teams had scouts or assistant coaches call the talented UK receiver. Not Dallas. Parcels made the call to Boone to let him know he was wanted.

"He said he really likes me and had graded film on me," Boone said. "This was the head man calling, a coach who has won the Super Bowl. That impressed me."

Maybe Parcels considered the UK job more than most of us realized. After all, Dallas was poised to draft UK defensive tackle Dewayne Robertson with the fifth pick if the New York Jets had not taken him fourth.

The Cowboys also toyed with the idea of drafting Kentucky running back Artose Pinner, who went to Detroit early in the fourth round, and called UK punter Glenn Pakulak about a possible free agent contract. Pakulak eventually turned down offers from Dallas, Cleveland and Pittsburgh to sign with Seattle.

Boone said Parcels told him the Cowboys were not going to draft a receiver. They took receiver Zuriel Smith in the sixth round, but Boone said that was because of his special teams skills.

"Coach Parcels told me they only had four receivers returning and none were over 6-0 or weighed over 190 (pounds)," Boone said. "They called me early Sunday and told me then that they hoped I was still around when the draft was over because they wanted me as a free agent."

Dallas would seem to be a little deeper at receiver than Parcels told Boone. However, the new coach may also be soon planning to release some players.

Right now, Cowboys have Galloway, Bryant and Glenn

As of today, the Cowboys have a high-priced veteran receiver in Joey Galloway, a rising star in Antonio Bryant and veteran Terry Glenn, who was obtained in an off-season trade. Bryant, a second-round draft pick last year, led the Cowboys with six touchdown catches last year and had the second-most receptions (44) of any rookie. Glenn is also a former first-round draft pick of New England, which was coached by Parcels at the time.

Working in Boone's favor is that Galloway has been a huge disappointment the last three years at Dallas.

Dallas also has three third-year receivers -- Reggie Swinton, Ken-Yon Rambo (you have to love that name) and Randall Williams -- on the roster along with DeVeren Johnson, last year's sixth-round draft pick.

Still, Boone believed Parcels when he told him he would have a legitimate chance to make the team. Boone had a team-high 41 catches for 706 yards and 10 touchdowns. He also did well in his workouts at UK's Pro Day for various NFL scouts, especially considering he had pulled a quadriceps muscle playing in an all-star game in January. However, that injury did keep him from going to the NFL combine in Indianapolis, one reason Boone thinks he was not drafted.

"It was frustrating to watch guys I played against get drafted and not have my name called," Boone said. "But I've got a great opportunity in front of me. Just because I was not drafted doesn't mean I can't make the team. The fit looks good and coach Parcels really liked me. He thinks my speed is fine and he likes my disciplined routes. He even talked to the former UK coaching staff to find out about me."

Boone will find out more about the Cowboys Thursday when he flies to Dallas for a three-day minicamp.

He's not the only Wildcat headed out

He's not the only Wildcat that will be headed out, either. Pakulak will be off to Seattle where he thinks he can make the team. Three other Cats -- defensive end Otis Grigsby (Miami), safety Quentus Cumby (Green Bay) and cornerback Derrick Tatum (Tennessee) -- also signed free agent contracts and will be off to minicamps this week.

Tight end Chase Harp of Danville, who had knee surgery Feb. 20 because of an injury suffered in an all-star game, got a call from the Houston Texans after the draft. He also heard from several teams before the draft. However, all the teams decided to see how his rehabilitation goes the next few weeks. If his rehab goes well, he could still have a chance to catch on with a team. If not this year, then Harp will work as a graduate assistant coach at UK and hope for a chance to make a NFL team in 2004.

"I hope all my teammates make it (in the NFL)," Boone said. "I know what it means to all of us, but I also know how hard it is. That's why I feel so good about what happened to me. I didn't get drafted, but I'm in a great situation to make a team and that's what really counts."

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