



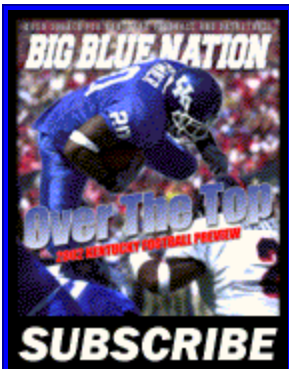
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Aaron Boone is Excellence in a Difficult Situation

By Jared Bonshire
Date: Aug 18, 2002

Coming to UK in the thick of all the problems, as a Junior College player with only 2 years of eligibility, shows the maturity of Aaron Boone.

Aaron Boone's maturity is not just shown in his decision to stay at UK, despite a 2-9 season and perhaps the inability to go to one this year no matter what. Its shown in how he carries himself off the field as well.

Aaron is not your typical football player. He is very active in other activities which include being a scout master, and being a mentor to lots of kids throughout the area.

He prides himself on being a leader to both the youth, as well as his teammates. Although some could consider those teammates youth as compared to the older Boone.

"Glenn Holt was in 6th grade when I was a senior in high school, so needless to say being a leader for him is just natural. I think he can look up to me."

His maturity can also be seen in HOW he leads. The type of leadership that comes from the way he carries himself, not what comes out of his mouth. "I try to lead by example. Me and Derek (Abney) and Tommy (Cook) are all the same. We are very intense on the football field, and that intensity naturally rubs off on the other receivers."

He also uses humor to lighten the mood in the locker room.

"Yeah, I have developed all of these stupid games that everyone makes fun of me for. And if you just sit there and watch people doing it, it looks so stupid, but they really are a lot of fun. We spend hours just laughing our butts off in the hotel room."

That leadership is even more influential to Chris Bernard, another Juco transfer in his first year at UK.

"I remember how difficult it was to adjust. Not just to the offensive scheme and football, but to life in a new place. I try to help him (Chris Bernard) out in that aspect, adjusting to the off the field things."

It was that type of help that Aaron did not have. He was the first Juco transfer at UK since Lance Mickleson who was also from Snow College.

"It took me a while to learn the system, and learn my role. Once I understood that aspect of my game, it showed on the field. When I knew I was going to start in the Georgia game, I played well. When I knew I was going to come off the bench at LSU, I played well, because I understood my role."

Now that Aaron has found his role as one of the go-to guys in the offense, he is ready for big things out of himself, and his team.

"I am striving not to be the weak link. To have that mental strength to fight through that 4th quarter."

If the team as a whole is building that mental toughness, striving never to be a weak link, Aaron believes that things could be bright for the Wildcats. So bright, that his goals have become much more than probably anyone would expect.

"When I was in high school, we won the state championship, when I was at Snow we were runner up. I want a conference championship ring. I think we can do it."

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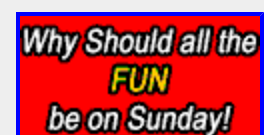
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But, as in true Aaron Boone form, with maturity and class, his reasoning for wanting that ring is not personal. "I want something to remember these guys with. You get close to your teammates, and I want something positive to remember them by."

Cheering for players like Aaron is easy, because they exemplify what we all strive to be. So, every time you see him catching a ball this year, try to yell just that much harder. He took a chance on UK, he deserves a little applause.



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