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VAUGHT'S VIEWS: Boone a Cinderella story

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His daily schedule starts at 6:30 a.m. and doesn't end until 10 p.m. or later. But Aaron Boone is not complaining.

Instead, the former University of Kentucky receiver is happy to be in the Dallas Cowboys training camp and competing for a roster spot for new coach Bill Parcells.

"It's definitely not easy, but I love what I am doing," said Boone. "My day is packed with meetings, two practices a day, and treatment for sore and injured body parts."

Boone was not picked in the NFL Draft in April. He signed with the Cowboys as a free agent and felt he had a legitimate chance to make the roster, or at least the practice squad. He spent most of the summer in Dallas preparing for training camp, which opened last week in San Antonio, and apparently his work paid off.

The Dallas Morning News called Boone the "Cinderella story" of training camp after he made a dazzling 35-yard catch of a Quincy Carter touchdown pass in last Friday's scrimmage and "turned around" cornerback Donald Mitchell several times the same day.

Boone has gone from barely having a ball thrown to him in practice to earning regular repetitions during team scrimmages.

One of the first to arrive and last to leave

Again, the Dallas Morning News noted that Boone arrives at the practice field "at least an hour" before other teammates to study his playbook. Boone felt one way to impress Parcells would be with his work ethic and he was one of the first players to arrive and last to leave during June and July workouts leading up to training camp.

"I just love what I am doing and I am trying to take advantage of a huge opportunity in my life," Boone said.

Unlike some players, Boone realizes how lucky he is to have a chance to make big money playing football. That's why he realizes he'll have to make a lasting impression on special teams to enhance his chances of earning a roster spot as a back-up receiver.

He's content to let the attention focus on receivers Joey Galloway, Antonio Bryant, Terry Glenn, Randal Williams, Ken-Yon Rambo and Reggie Swinton. Yet there's no way Parcells, or his staff, will fail to notice a player willing to spend extra time on the practice field or accept any role that will make a team better.

Considering the turmoil the Cowboys have endured in recent years, including the biting criticism by former Dallas running back Emmitt Smith in a Sports Illustrated article, Boone's presence has to be as refreshing as the cool air in the Alamodome where the Cowboys are holding most of their preseason practices.

He understands patience

Boone understands patience, too. Remember he went on a two-year mission trip to Peru before he went to Snow Junior College as a reserve quarterback. He moved to receiver his second season, earned a scholarship offer from Kentucky and then had to wait for a chance to shine in 2001.

However, he had a knack for making touchdown catches, one reason he's third on UK's all-time receiving list with 16 touchdown catches despite playing only two years. By last season he became the big-play receiver, catching a team-high 41 passes for 706 yards and 10 touchdowns.

That work ethic is what he hopes will make him impossible not to notice during the next three weeks of training camp in San Antonio. He's eagerly awaiting the team's first preseason game at Phoenix this weekend where he figures to get significant playing time as Parcels starts trying to figure who he'll keep on his final roster.

If you want to keep up with Boone's daily progress, go to his website www.aaronrboone.com. His sister, Tammy, updates the site daily.

"If you want to follow what is going on down here through chat boards, newspapers and magazines, she does a great job," Boone said.

Just like Boone apparently is doing so far with the Cowboys.

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