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August 10, 2003

## UK receivers eager to fill void left by WR Boone

**Darrell Bird**

Much has been made of Kentucky's need to fill a huge void left by running back Artose Pinner, the SEC player of the year who rushed for 1,414 yards and 13 touchdowns.

However, a big piece of UK's offense also departed with senior wide receiver Aaron Boone, who led the team in total receptions (41), receiving yards (706), and yards per catch (17.2). But none of those impressive stats can rival the fact that Boone also led UK receivers with 10 touchdowns, nearly half of the team's 24 total passing TDs.

"Some pretty big shoes, for sure," said junior wideout Tommy Cook.

"Boone was a gamer, a one-in-a-million guy," added fellow senior Derek Abney.

Boone caught touchdown passes in five of UK's seven wins, and in four games he hauled in a pass to put UK on the scoreboard for the first time.

"Every third or fourth catch was a touchdown for him," Cook said. "That's going to be a big scoring void on offense to be filled, especially with Artose leaving also. But we have the guys to do it. We have veterans who can do it, and we've got young guys to do it. I think we have the talent. It's a sold corps of receivers."

Abney finished 2002 with 40 receptions for 569 yards and four touchdowns. Cook had 22 catches for 276 yards and two TDs. Others returning include Chris Bernard (14 catches) and Glenn Holt (4).

One way to fill the void is in a desire already voiced by coach Rich Brooks and offensive coordinator Ron Hudson to see Abney's per catch average jumped from 14 to 19 yards.

"It will change," Abney said matter-of-factly. "In the past, Kentucky's offense has been kind of a dump off pass kind of team. With that, you're going to have fewer yards per catch. With this offense, I definitely think we're going to have deeper catches.

Additional assistance in replacing Boone's impact is coincidental with the new system installed by Hudson.

"The new offense impacts receivers because each receiver now knows what every other receiver is doing," Cook said. "In all the other offenses we had before, we didn't know every position. When we would go to five wide, we didn't know every receiver's route. This time we do.

"With this offense, you have to know every position," Cook said. "I think it's going to help us out. Knowing what our teammates are doing beside us, what they're doing to help

themselves get open. I think it's going to help us.

Despite being seniors, Cook and Abney admit that the transition wasn't a simple one.

"This offense is so complicated," Cook said. "There are so many different schemes we can throw at you, and there are certain routes that fit with certain schemes so you have to memorize them and have them down or you won't ever pick up this offense."

"It was hard because the terminology was different," Abney said. "But you learn that there are schemes to this offense, and you learn to recognize those schemes. Once you've got it, it's great."

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