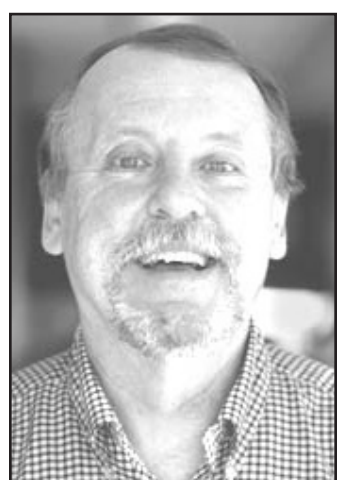


Daniel Honored To Receive Paul Hornung Award



Larry Vaught

Paintsville coach Joe Chirico knows exactly what he hopes everyone will remember about his star player, Kash Daniel.

"That he gave his heart and soul to his teammates; that he left it all on the field, and the product was both entertaining and impressive," said Chirico. "Kash was blessed with size, strength, and athletic ability, but it was his hard work and perseverance that allowed him to develop into the gifted athlete he is today."

That "gifted" athlete has been named Kentucky's Gatorade Player of the Year as well winner of the Paul Hornung Award given to the state's top player. He completed 73 of 123 passes for 1,319 yards and 15

touchdowns and ran for 926 yards and 22 touchdowns. On defense, the linebacker had 158 tackles and four fumble recoveries. As a junior he had 111 tackles and four interceptions, including two he returned for scores, and on offense rushed and passed both for over 1,000 yards and helped account for 23 touchdowns.

He will play in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl on Jan. 9 in San Antonio along with future University of Kentucky teammates Drake Jackson of Woodford County and Landon Young of Lafayette.

Daniel received the Paul Hornung Award given by the Louisville Quarterback Club to the state's top player last week after earlier being named Kentucky's Gatorade Player of the Year.

"To be mentioned with Paul Hornung, one of the greatest players of all time, is something special," said Daniel. "There is only a select few players you can say are great football players. Mr. Hornung excelled in all parts of the game. When you look at this list of past winners, it is a great honor to be mentioned in the same sentence for receiving this award."

"Without my teammates

and coaches, this would have been impossible. They gave their heart and soul every day just like I did. I wish this could be a team award. Without the other 10 guys on the football field it would not have been possible for me to win."

Kentucky's collapse that left coach Mark Stoops' team at 5-7 for the second straight season has many fans wondering how the touted 2016 recruiting class will hold together.

Daniel says Kentucky's commits talk a lot about what lies ahead.

"We are not sugar-coating anything," Daniel said. "We kept up with each other when we were playing. Now that our seasons are over, we talk about when we are taking our official visits and talk about getting to campus and how excited we are to play for Kentucky. We want to show we will do whatever we've got to do to help coach (Mark) Stoops."

"I think we are a pretty tight, pretty solid recruiting group. We all want to get after it. It was fun in high school but I think we are all ready to get to Lexington and try and turn this thing around. We are in a big group chat on Twitter. We keep each other up. Everybody stayed positive all year. We have a group of great football players, but they are even better guys. We love football and what we do. None of us are troublemakers. None of us are about ourselves. We just love football."

He feels a special bond with Jackson and Young and says the three of them along with Zy'Aire Hughes of McCracken County and Davonte Robinson of Lexington Henry Clay have a special in-state pride.

"We are looking forward to representing our home state and want to put our home state on our back and get rolling," Daniel said. "It will take hard work, but we know it and playing for Kentucky matters to us. We mention all the time how special it will be to wear the Kentucky blue on our shoulders and go out in Commonwealth Stadium and do what God lets us do, and that's play football."

"We tell the other guys this is our home state team and we came here because of that and we have got to get this program back

where it should be and keep it there. It will be a process and won't come easy. But the players already established at UK and with this class coming in, I don't see that being a problem."

The Kentucky coach made an in-home visit with Daniel not long after Kentucky's season ended.

"He was aggravated about losing to Louisville and it showed he does care and he wants to win more than anybody," Daniel said. "The players are the same way. They want to win as bad as coach Stoops does. Stoops told me that whatever you need to do to help the football team, I want you to do it."

Chirico has no doubts Daniel will do that just as he did at Paintsville whether it was football, basketball or baseball.

"He is a truly humble young man. For every award, accolade, and achievement he earned, he always credited his teammates," Chirico said. "Even after he became a nationally ranked linebacker and a Division I recruit, he stayed grounded and focused on his senior season of high school football."

Daniel has become somewhat of a media darling with his eastern Kentucky charm, quick wit and honesty. He's been on numerous radio call-in shows to give fans a chance to get to know him, too.

Is there a shy bone in his body?

"Based on how he handled media and recruiting, sure does not seem like it," Chirico said. "Kash has many attributes, but shyness is not one of them. He is a passionate competitor, and that passion spread to his teammates."

The coach sees nothing but good things ahead for Daniel.

"Kash will be special in any endeavor he undertakes. When it comes to the goals he sets for himself, his attitude is the epitome of the old saying 'anything worth doing is worth doing right.' Kash has dreamed of playing football at UK since childhood, and I anticipate he will be special at the next level because he will put in the work necessary to be the best he can be on and off of the field," Chirico said.

Daniel leaves Paintsville



Kentucky commit Kash Daniel said he was honored to receive the Paul Hornung Award from Hornung and the Louisville Quarterback Club.

(Larry Vaught Photo)

with one regret. He hurt his knee and missed his team's playoff loss to Pikeville, a team Paintsville beat during the regular season.

"It was heartbreaking not to play. Those are the guys you grew up with and all we talked about was our senior year and winning the championship," Daniel said. "Then you get to middle school and find out you are pretty good at football. Then you really want to win state, something that has never been done at Paintsville."

"You put in all extra work to try and win state. To have to tell those guys that the doctor told me I can't go, it really broke my heart. I did not want to let those guys down. It will be the same at Kentucky. I'm all-in with Kentucky and the guys coming in with me. They are my new brothers and whatever it takes to win, that's what I want to do."

Florida junior quarterback Mac Jones committed early to the University of Kentucky in large part due to offensive coordinator Shannon Dawson.

Dawson had recruited him when he was coaching at West Virginia and Jones decided there was no reason to wait and gave his pledge to UK in late July.

When Jones did verbally commit to UK, it set off a flurry of six commitments in the next few days that included Russ Yeast, James Hudson and Mike Warren, all out of Ohio.

So what was Jones' reaction to Dawson's firing?

"Not sure yet. Want to make sure hire fits me," said Jones.

Jones, who recently got an official offer from West Virginia, came on WLAP (630AM) Sunday Sports Talk to talk about Dawson's dismissal and his future.

"I wanted to come on and hope there were a lot of listeners to say that Kentucky football is going to change and to stay all in with Kentucky," Jones said.

He said both Dawson and head coach Mark Stoops called him with news about the coaching change. He said Stoops indicated he would hire an "Air Raid type of coordinator" to replace Dawson.

One popular candidate seems to be Cincinnati offensive coordinator Eddie Gran, who has also been rumored to be a potential candidate for some head coaching spots.

"I love Eddie Gran's offense. I would love to play in that," Jones said. "I am not seeking offers, but just trying to keep my options open while I see what happens."

"I really love Kentucky and last year I did see some signs of improvement. We had a few plays in some games that went the other way and could have changed the whole season around."

Jones said he won't play soccer or lacrosse so he can spend more time lifting weights during the offseason.

Tarullo Was Always Basketball Obsessed

by LARRY VAUGHT

Louisville native Anna Maria Tarullo has been an intern with Fox News in New York while completing her degree at the University of Georgia. However, she grew up a "huge" Kentucky fan and that has not changed.

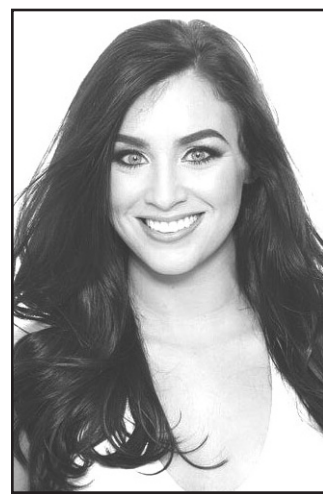
"I've always been basketball-obsessed. My Dad was my basketball coach growing up and he is such a student of the game. From about age 10 and up my Dad and I bonded over our love of watching college basketball and discussing everything from players to defenses to coaching decisions," said Tarullo. "I'd like to say we both have pretty high basketball IQs."

"My dad took me to a ton of games growing up. I think I've been to 11 Final Fours. My greatest memories in life come from those Final Fours! There is nothing like that energy or atmosphere. When I got to work my first Final Four with CBS in 2014, I was euphoric. I always tell my mom, if I could be anywhere in the world, doing anything, it would be at a Final Four."

"You should have seen me during that Michigan versus Kentucky Elite Eight game that sent UK to Dallas (for the 2014 Final Four). Don't think I've ever been more excited in my life. I could go on and on about my passion for college basketball and how I became such a fan."

She's worked for ESPN and CBS. She's been a tailgate correspondent for Saturday Down South, a popular Southeastern Conference football publication, concentrating on Georgia and Kentucky. She's been a contributor for WNSR Sports Radio in Nashville and The Dawg House radio show. She's also done a variety of other sports-related jobs.

"At Fox News I did everything from being a production assistant on shows such as Fox and Friends to working in business development. I will be moving into either a production as-



Anna Maria Tarullo

sistant or anchor assistant position at Fox unless another opportunity doesn't come up first. My dream job is to be involved in college basketball (radio, writing, reporting) in any capacity possible. I would also be interested in NBA. If it's basketball, I'm into it," she said.

Especially Kentucky basketball.

She went to Sacred Heart Academy in Louisville. She calls her father a "turncoat" because he cheers for both Kentucky and Louisville.

"My mom loves Kentucky," Tarullo said. "But my brother and Dad both attended Louisville, and my brother was drummer in the UofL marching band and pep band. So I had the choice between UK, UofL, or both — which was unacceptable — and for some reason I was drawn to Kentucky and never ever wavered."

"I'm history-obsessed and so enamored with tradition. And who doesn't have better tradition or a more historically-knowledgeable fan base than Kentucky? That's my favorite part about BBN (Big Blue Nation). The fans aren't just passionate, they are knowledgeable. From the grandmas to the 9-year-olds, everyone at Rupp respects the game enough to be knowledgeable. I love that. I literally feel more strongly and passionately about UK hoops than just about anything in my life. As crazy as that sounds, I'm sure UK fans understand."

Always Pretended Playing UK-UofL Game

by LARRY VAUGHT

As a youngster, Dominique Hawkins said when he played basketball with his friends they always pretended they were playing a Kentucky-Louisville game.

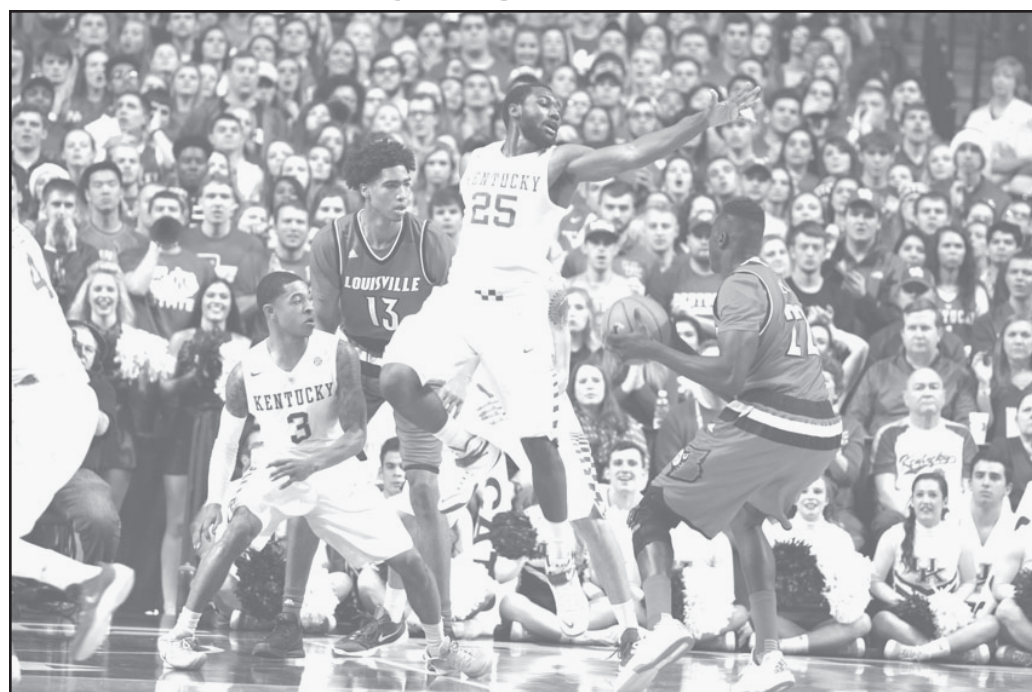
"Usually Kentucky would always win. It was fun though," Hawkins said.

It was again last week when Hawkins helped provide needed help after starter Isaiah Briscoe was hurt in pregame warmups. Hawkins hit three 3-pointers and scored a career-high 14 points in the 75-73 win. He said it was probably his best game since high school at Madison Central.

"I definitely had pictured it one day that one of these games I'm going to go in and make a lot of shots, because in the summer I basically was knocking all my shots down I felt like. I was really confident. I just had to get back in the gym and shoot more," Hawkins said.

He said he could not put into words what playing so well meant to him.

"It's beyond whatever amazing is. To be able to be a Kentuckian and play that well, I'm just blessed," Hawkins said. "It means a lot to me. Maybe my teammates really don't know



Dominique Hawkins (25) not only was active on defense against Louisville, but he also hit a career-high three 3-pointers and scored 14 points in the win.

(Vicky Graff Photo)

what the rivalry means, stuff like that. It's just another game. It's going to get us going. We needed a big win like that. We struggled last game against Ohio State. To be able to bounce back and get this win is definitely going to give us confidence."

It was a potential season-defining game. If Kentucky had lost going into SEC play, it would have been a big hit not only to the team's confidence but also any potential NCAA seeding. Now coach

John Calipari has time to put his players through two or three practices a day to make improvements still needed.

"There are a lot of great games like these. For me to have the game I did today was just a blessing for me. I didn't realize — I didn't know I even had so many points until the end of the game. My teammates had my back. They gave me big hugs and high fives, and told me that I can do this in

a game if I really want to. It's definitely going to give me confidence for the next few games," Hawkins said.

"I know when I'm shooting the ball I just need to be confident more. Today, I was really confident. Every shot that went up I felt like it was going to go in. Pretty much it did."

And that's pretty much why UK was able to outlast Louisville thanks to a Kentucky kid's childhood dream coming true.