

UK Football A Big Adjustment For Daniel



Larry Vaught

Linebacker Kash Daniel knew playing football at Kentucky and in the Southeastern Conference would be a big adjustment. What the former Paintsville High School star did not know was just how big it would be.

"It has been challenging mentally every day to prepare yourself to go work and do everything you have to do 100 miles per hour no matter what kind of drill it is. It can be a walk through, a lift session. You better bust your tail or you will be an outcast and people will see that very clearly. Just the pace of the game is so different," said Daniel.

He can now joke about his welcome to big-time football moment during spring practice.

"We were doing punt and I was starting at guard and my job was to block the right guy on my side. He was pretty tight, so it was not like I had to take two steps outside to block him. But he dipped his shoulder when they snapped the ball and I stepped out there and I got one hand on him and he was by me. This definitely is not Paintsville any more," Daniel laughed and said.

Daniel graduated a semester early so he could enroll at Kentucky in January to start his collegiate career. Not only has he had to adjust to football, but the academic challenge has been different.

"Just the fact in high school you had the same class for five days a week (in high school) and now I got Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes three times and then I have one on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It is just time management knowing I got this to do on this day and this on that day. Just manage your time,

study the playbook and have a little free time to yourself," Daniel said.

He's become a recognizable figure in Lexington like many UK athletes are. That certainly does not bother him because of his outgoing personality. However, he has not let that attention change him.

"I am just a freshman here trying to make a name for myself," Daniel said. "Those high school days are over. Everybody was used to reading (newspaper, website) articles about me. I understood that and knew coming in that there would not be a lot of articles written about me and that's fine because I was not about that anyway. I am just a normal guy."

He was realistic about his chances for playing time as a true freshman when he arrived on campus. That has not changed.

"At the end of the day we are all one solid group that helps out each other. It is not about this is my job. You want that job more than anything, but at the end of the day you are still brothers. It is just a good family atmosphere with those guys. The competition is fierce but off the field we want to love each other," Daniel said.

"There are so many concepts you have to learn and so many words that can mean different things in different coverages and personnel. I came in to get some early experience. I am struggling right now. Went from high school to college just like that. Hard to get everything down but I am glad I came in the spring. My teammates are good guys to be around on and off the field."

Perplexing Transfer

Sporting News columnist Mike DeCourcy remains a bit perplexed about why Charles Matthews decided to transfer from Kentucky and seems destined to either be at Michigan or Xavier next season.

"I totally don't understand Matthews. Why do you choose Kentucky if you don't expect to compete? Yes, you're the 30-something player in the 2015 class and they're bringing in two top-10s to compete with you for playing time. Did you really expect otherwise? It makes no sense

to me to leave after a single season," DeCourcy said.

"I understand why Marcus Lee left. He needs an opportunity to play where there'll be less pressure on him each possession and less competition for playing time. He needs the year away to work on his skills."

DeCourcy doesn't think losing both players will hurt coach John Calipari's team.

"The backcourt is not as deep, but Dominique Hawkins will merit minutes and you've got De'Aaron Fox, Malik Monk and Isaiah Briscoe. It's about finding a system and rotation that works for this group, not whether the group has enough guys," DeCourcy said.

Tai Wynyard

Tai Wynyard knows coming in for a semester at Kentucky last year helped him even if he did not play in games and only practiced.

"Coming in earlier has gotten my conditioning up more. It got me to see how I can work back home. Obviously back home you don't get that much conditioning or that kind of work," Wynyard said Wednesday.

He does hope he can help Kentucky's inside game next season.

"I mean hopefully I have a role on this team. Everyone on this team wants a role," Wynyard said. "The first thing in the first meeting that Coach Cal said was that none of you have been promised minutes, none of you are promised anything. It's all just completely open."

And what can he bring to the team?

"I'm going to try to dunk on everyone if I can. I'm going to try to be physical. I'm going to try to play strong by setting great screens and getting rebounds and things like that," Wynyard said.

First Rounder?

Both ESPN draft analyst Chad Ford and Ed Isaacson of NBAdraftblog.com agree that Alex Poythress likely would have been a first-round draft pick if he had left Kentucky after his freshman season. But going into Thursday night's draft after his senior season, some are not sure he will even be drafted.

So what happened to Poythress after his freshman

year?

"Two things stand out – confidence and understanding of the game. At times as a freshman, you could see him just go out, do his thing and not over think things, but once he made a mistake, they just seemed to snowball," Isaacson said. "That's okay as a freshman, but it continued to happen, until his role became so specific, there wasn't much room for him to over think it."

"Also, he just never seemed to grasp a lot of the little concepts that made Kentucky's offense and defense work. Individually, he had some of the skills, but he was never able to get them to translate in the bigger scheme. Of course there were other factors – his offensive skills never seemed to mature, especially his shooting ability, and the injury that took away most of his junior season, which could have been a great time for him to step up as a team leader."

But could Poythress still work his way into the NBA and maybe play multiple years?

"If he can play great defense and hit 3's, I think he can have a long career in the NBA," Ford said. "It's the question about will he be a great 3-point shooter that teams are concerned about. He shot it really well his freshman year, kind of went down from there, but I see -- I watched him work out several times in LA. I think I see the potential there for him to become that, and you can't teach his athleticism."

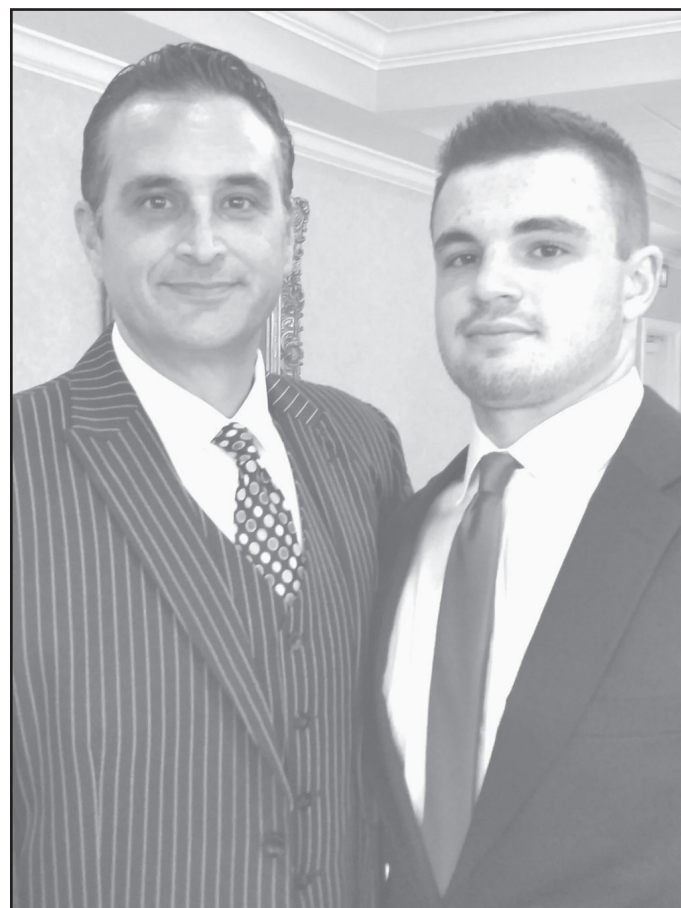
Isaacson also sees a future that could include Poythress staying in the league.

"I would say there is an excellent chance he will get multiple shots at the NBA, drafted or not, within the next five years. He still has the potential to be a good role player if he plays tough defense and hits the boards. Whether he can make the most of those chances will be seen," Isaacson said.

Skal Questions

NBA coaches and scouts have questions about Skal Labissiere's toughness and overall understanding of the game going into Thursday night's draft. However, ESPN draft analyst Chad Ford says Labissiere's individual pre-draft workouts answered none of those questions.

"So they really have two options. One is that a lot of teams design these one-on-



Kash Daniel, right, had his father, Scott, with him when he was named the Paul Hornung Award winner in December. Now Daniel is still adjusting to life at the University of Kentucky after graduating from high school early. (Larry Vaught/Verizon Photo)

none workouts to extremely fatigue and stress players. They're constantly throwing things at them and trying to confuse them, trying to wear them down, trying to get them tired, and then they want to see what is their resiliency. How do they respond to getting thrown a bunch of things at them that maybe they're not

expecting and being asked sometimes to do hard things that they're going to fail at and then being asked to do it again and again?" Ford said.

"Some players respond to that and really take up the challenge, and other players, believe it or not, quit. You'd be shocked. Players quit, stop workouts."

CHURCH NEWS

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Friday-Sunday, July 1-3

52nd Mt. Mission Conference

The 52nd Annual Mountain Mission Conference will be held at South Irvine Baptist Church, 1215 South Irvine Road, Friday-Sunday, July 1-3, 2016.

Friday, July 1st services begin at 7:00 p.m. with Bro. Jayson Minix from Cornerstone Baptist Mission in Salt Lick and Pastor Charles Kim Landrum from Grace Baptist Church in La Porte, Indiana.

Services begin at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 2nd with Pastor Bob Hagan, Flat Rock Missionary Baptist Church in Michigan, Bro. David Mitch-

ell from Charleston, West Virginia; and Pastor Jimmy Nelson, Landmark Baptist Church in Haltom City, Texas; followed by lunch. No afternoon or evening services.

Sunday, July 3rd services begin at 10:00 a.m. with Bro. Harold Becknell from Island City; and Pastor Jimmy Nelson. There will be no afternoon or evening services after lunch.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Bro. Donnie Burford is the pastor at South Irvine.

For more information, call (606) 73-8298.

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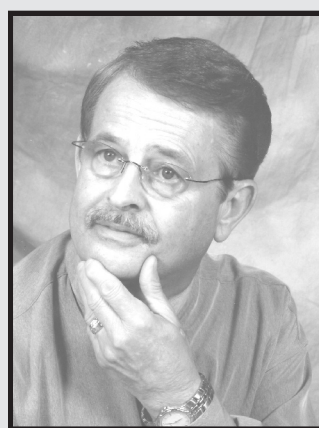
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