

# Barker Works To Make Himself Known To Fans



Larry Vaught

Give Drew Barker credit for understanding that many University of Kentucky fans really do not yet know him -- and he wants to keep working to change that.

"I know I have had some setbacks before but I would not label that as who I am as a person. I am definitely nice and polite. Sometimes people get the wrong picture of someone and you can't tell that is really not right if you don't know them," said the Kentucky sophomore quarterback.

He came to Kentucky as a high profile recruit after saying no to South Carolina and others to stay in his home state. However, two off-field incidents during his redshirt freshman season made many question both his leadership and discipline.

Barker had to learn tough lessons about being in the spotlight.

"No doubt, especially since everything was so public. I feel everything happens for a reason and the lessons you learn in life are part of that. Everyone has a plan. I have definitely learned from those incidents and they have definitely changed me into who I am today," Barker said. "I am more mature and seeing things from different angles. Obviously I wish they had not happened, but maybe it helped me in a way."

Quarterbacks coach Darin Hinshaw has done a lot of work with Barker not only on the field but also helping him establish a new brand for himself.

"He's doing a great job of leadership. When a quarterback has not been successful on the field yet, you really can't lead with your mouth," Hinshaw said. "You have to lead with your actions. It's hard. You have to be disciplined. You have to get up in the morning. First one in, last to leave. That's what I want to see him continue to do."

Hinshaw said it wasn't just him impressed with how Barker has changed. He said many connected with the football program have noticed the change. Now he doesn't want to see that change as UK draws closer to opening the season Sept. 3.

"Now the minute you think you have arrived and are doing good, that's the minute you start going downhill. We have to continue for him to work hard. That goes for all the quarterbacks, not just Drew," Hinshaw said.

Barker found out how fast that image could change

when it first got involved in a pellet gun incident on campus and then was involved in two altercations in Richmond during his first offseason at UK.

"You have got to realize what kind of spotlight your actions can bring if you are on a Division I football team, especially if you are a quarterback. You just have to always have that in the back of your head. Some other person that was just a regular student, it might not have been as big but I have to realize what an impact it could have when something happens," Barker said.

He knows the public scrutiny he was under was not easy to endure, especially for his parents. But he said they never wavered in their support.

"They have had my back through a lot. They tell me all the time life is about choices, decisions and consequences. You make a bad choice and bad decision, you have to face the consequences," Barker said. "Same thing with good choices and good decisions. You will get good rewards."

"Just living my life by that and they have been a big help and been there for me. They have told me, 'You have to straighten up and do this and that.' But they have done that their whole life and I can't thank them enough for that."

## UK Game Changer

Kentucky's new \$45-million football training facility should be a game-changer for coach Mark Stoops and his program. Forget about making excuses any more for UK football not being able to compete because of lack of facilities. With the upgrades to Commonwealth Stadium and the training facility, UK facilities are on par with the best in the nation.

Former UK defensive lineman Ricky Lumpkin was working out in the weight room at the new facility last week getting ready to report to the Baltimore Colts training camp next week.

"I come back and work out and see all the changes to the stadium and training facility," Lumpkin said. "They basically have blown it up and started over like I once said they should do. There's no more excuses. These guys (players) have everything they need. I would have loved to have had all this."

"NFL teams, expect maybe two or three, don't have anything like this. I'm not sure any college team can have anything better. This is state of the art in every way."

Jeremy Jarmon was at Kentucky for four years and then played two years in the National Football League with Washington. He's impressed with the new facility, too.

"Everything is so well thought out. It is incredible," Jarmon said.

Kentucky recruiting coordinator Vince Marrow has said the facility is easily among the top five in the nation.

"I have been to five or six

(NFL) facilities and the one in UK has put together is state of the art," Jarmon said. "A lot of NFL teams are not into the business of updating training facilities. Those NFL teams are not recruiting. The NFL attitude is that if you have the basics, that's it. In college, you have got to keep up and Kentucky has more than done that."

## Hatred of Wildcats

Blue Ribbon College Basketball Yearbook editor Chris Dortch understands why some fans seem to almost have a hatred of Kentucky basketball.

"Fan is just short for fanatic and can mean Looney-Tunes," said Dortch. "If you are like me and appreciate basketball and understand why people of Kentucky appreciate basketball, you can appreciate Kentucky fans' appreciation of their program."

Dortch expects John Calipari to have another team UK fans will appreciate this season, especially with the return of sophomore Isaiah Briscoe.

"Cal had his pick of guys to play the point last year," Dortch said. "Not anybody could really stop him off the dribble. If he just gains consistency in his jump shot, he could be the key guy for UK because of all he can do."

He also thinks Derek Willis and Isaac Humphries could both play bigger roles than some envision.

"Probably 95 percent of the teams in college basketball, Humphries would have played on last year. He could play a ton this year and will really help with rebounding I think," Dortch said. "I thought Derek Willis was a key factor down the stretch last year with the way he stretched defenses. Cal can use him strategically and he will continue to be a key."

"Plus, freshmen need up-perclassmen to show them the way to play and say, 'Cal yelled but he does not hate you. Any year Kentucky has holdovers and guys who did contribute a lot the previous year, it really bodes well for the next year. Cal has a lot of five-star guys, but he needs blenders, too.'"

## UK Integration

Kentucky's preseason football schedule calendar honors four players — Nate Northington, Greg Page, Wilbur Hackett and Houston Hogg — who helped not only integrate UK football but also the Southeastern Conference. Kentucky deputy athletics director DeWayne Peevy is especially proud of that as well as the statue that will be unveiled Sept. 22 outside the new training facility honoring the four.

"It has been great talking to the families and the guys and letting them share their stories with our staff and current players and letting those players see what those four did for them," Peevy said. "It lets them understand the opportunities they have now and not to waste them."

Peevy has only been at UK eight years. He had no idea why it took from 1966 when Northington and Page broke the color barrier to 2016 — 50 years — for UK to honor what they did for college athletics.

"Maybe this was just a great time to do it. If you wait so long, then you want make it worth the wait," Peevy said. "We have a new training center ready to open. I think we have done it the right way to honor these men now. Nate and Greg are already in the (UK) Hall of Fame. A lot of things have built up to this."

"I am proud that everyone was on board with this. These men and their families are very appreciative of what Kentucky is doing and it is comforting to know we are doing the right thing. It

might have been a little late, but it is not too late."

## More Is Expected

Kentucky's receivers know more is expected of them this season not only by fans, but also by new receivers coach Lamar Thomas. He played on national championship teams at Miami and also had a successful NFL career. Players admit his success impacts them.

"When you hear stuff like that, it makes you feel good every day as you drive to work. You look forward to the next day and being in their lives and how they are doing daily," Thomas said. "They are all young adults coming in and we are trying to develop them into men."

"For me, I do have the blueprint because I was able to make it. Now it is passing on the good and bad to them. That's why I got into coaching. I wanted to be a mentor and help young men be better and in return it has helped me become a better man."

He worked for Bobby Petrino at Western Kentucky and came with him to Louisville before joining Mark Stoops' staff in the offseason.

"I really liked what I saw from afar. Coach Stoops is a great coach and everything I heard about him is true. I heard he was a good coach to coach under. Really a family man, enjoys coaching and treats his coaches and players well," Jackson said. "I like that and everything is true. This program ... just a lot of excitement and I wanted to be a part of it."

## Dallas Owens Jr.

Finally, kudos to Cambridge Place in Lexington for honoring Dallas Owens Jr., one of the starts on UK's dynamic 1976 and 1977 teams. He developed a brain tumor and dies at age 56 in 2013. His parents — Dallas and Lillie — now reside at Cambridge Place.

Dick Gabriel helped put together a special video presentation honoring the former UK player. Among those who came to the celebration were Derrick Ramsey and Dave Hopewell, Owens' former teammates. Ramsey played quarterback and Hopewell center. Tim Biggs, a trainer for that team, now works at Cambridge Place.



Drew Barker (7) wants to show that he can not only lead UK on the field, but that he can also be a leader off the field. (Vicky Graff Photo)

# Cruzers Newz

## TWIN CITY CRUZERS - schedule of events

The Twin-City Kruzers will be meeting Monday, August 1, 7-8 p.m. in Irvine City Hall. The next Cruise-In is Saturday, August 13..

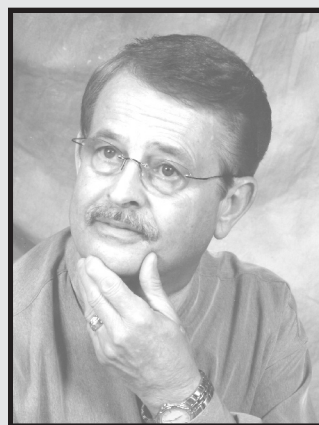
Twin City Kruzerz Cruise-Ins are free and open to the public. The Club is planning several cruises and cookouts for members this year.

Cruise-Ins are held at the Courthouse on the second Saturday of the month from 5 until 9 p.m. Meetings are held at Irvine City Hall from 7-8 p.m. on the first Monday of the month.

Anyone interested in joining needs to talk to a Club member or call Melvin Williams @ 723-5447 or Tobo Bryant @ 723-7248 or 3858.

- August 1st - meeting
- August 13th - cruise in
- September 6th - meeting
- September 10th - cruise in
- Sept. 17th - Railroad Festival car show

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Kentucky's 2016 football poster features four players who helped break the color barrier both at UK and in the SEC.