

Kanaskie's TSU roots run deep

BY BETHANY BOYLE
Staff Reporter

The road that led freshman Kyle Kanaskie to Truman State last fall began more than a decade ago at Drake University when transfer student Matt Woodley filled the guard position on Coach Kurt Kanaskie's Div. 1 roster.

Today Woodley is the head men's basketball coach for Truman, and Kyle plays guard for the same man who once ran drills with his father.

Looking back, Kurt said Woodley displayed qualities of a model student and athlete during his time with the Drake Bulldogs. Kurt said he remembers Woodley as a hard worker who pushed himself and his teammates to succeed.

"Nobody worked harder than Matt. No body put in the time, effort, and sweat that he did. And he really studied the game," Kurt said.

Kanaskie said he suspected his former player would start coaching because of the purposeful way he approached basketball — Woodley's knowledge of and passion for the game resulted from a diligent commitment to learning it inside-out. Woodley also came from a family of coaches and it seemed like a natural fit for him, Kurt said.

The two kept in contact throughout the years, and reconnected during 2005 when Woodley recruited Kurt's eldest son Kevin to play for Middle Tennessee State. Woodley was serving as an assistant coach at the time and only coached Kevin for one year. Kevin

stayed at Middle Tennessee, finishing his college basketball career as the all-time assist leader for Sun Belt Conference and completing his health and physical education degree. Kurt said he thinks Woodley's presence was a major factor in Kevin's decision to attend Middle Tennessee State.

"Matt was instrumental in getting Kevin to go there," Kanaskie said. "He had a lot of options and was fairly highly recruited, but I think the relationship and the trust that he had with Matt made the decision fairly easy."

Kevin said he remembers the long and arduous recruiting process for college basketball, and especially how Woodley had contacted him shortly after being hired at Middle Tennessee and came to visit him in Pennsylvania. The oldest Kanaskie brother said he liked the school, but Matt's arrival on the scene sealed the deal.

"Remembering how he played for my dad, I knew I wanted to play for him because I looked up to him as a player," Kevin said.

With the arrival of 2013 and Kyle's turn for college recruitment, Kevin said Woodley reached out to his younger brother with the prospect of Truman. Kyle would have the opportunity to play for Woodley as a Bulldog, just as Matt did for Kurt almost 15 years earlier.

Woodley said he thoroughly enjoyed his years as a guard with the Drake Bulldogs, and the opportunity to play Div. 1 basketball for Kurt is something he does not take for granted.



Adam Antor/ Index

Freshman guard Kyle Kanaskie dribbles down the court against the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Kanaskie has a long history with Bulldog Basketball.

"I loved his coaching philosophy," Woodley said. "He was very intense, very hard-nosed, very driven. I think a lot of how I am as a coach is how coach Kanaskie was. He shaped me."

Woodley said his former coach not only inspired him but also assisted him in the transition from college basketball to career. The two maintained contact, and it was Kurt who Matt came to for advice at several points in his career. Kurt also helped him with a few job opportunities, Woodley said.

After watching the Kanaskie boys grow up, Coach Woodley said he knew they were going to be good athletes. When

the time came for Kevin and then Kyle to choose a college and a team, Woodley said he was excited for the opportunity to work with them.

Woodley said he is grateful to have Kyle on his team at Truman. Woodley describes him as a "tough, hard-nosed kid," something he respects and attributes to his Kanaskie family upbringing.

"He's exceeded all my expectations that I've had," Woodley said. "He's been such an exceptional player for us. As a freshman, at the start of every game he has been very consistent."

Sports stars end up with a bad rap

The world in which we live is riddled with people who have never internalized the lessons we all learned in kindergarten, in between munching on paste and naptime. Treating others the way you want to be treated, and never judging a book by its cover are ideas that first spring to mind. When I turn on ESPN or look online at the goings on in sports I see some of people who long ago have forgotten these proverbs.



COMMENTARY
Jonathan Rembold

After the NFC championship game, Seattle Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman unleashed some of the most entertaining post-game chatter throughout recent memory, much to the chagrin of a shocked and terrified sideline reporter Erin Andrews. What Sherman said and how he acted during the game brought an onslaught of negativity from the media — talk via social media and between my friends was surprisingly harsh.

The phrase that seemed to rise to the top of the heap was "Richard Sherman is a thug." Once this statement was made, it was picked up and repeated.

The thing is, Sherman is not a thug. Sherman was born in Compton, Calif. which to people who love to look at cov-

ers and never dig into the story seems like a golden ticket to thuggery. However, Sherman was a two-sport athlete, a scholar athlete and a salutatorian. I don't know about you, but if these are the prerequisites to being a thug, Tupac was calling his lifestyle the wrong thing.

After high school, Sherman didn't stop thuggin'. He took his talents to California and Stanford University. There he was living the thug life as he played for four years. An injury took him out for one season, and staying for a fifth year allowed him to achieve a master's degree in communication. Wait a minute, Sherman wasn't really a thug in college, was he?

Even with all this, there still could have been time for him to change once he got in the NFL, you might say. When I told my friends I thought Sherman's actions on the field were hilarious and in good fun, because, after all, he was a grown man playing a game for a living. But they disagreed, and said he was bad for the game. But Richard Sherman is perfect for the game. His persona on the field shows what is needed to perform at a high level in the NFL. Off the field, I don't think he goes around making choke signs at people and talking down to them during an interview. But because Sherman looks the way he does and spoke the way he did, we immediately think what some of the media wants us to think.

What happened with Richard Sherman on a national level is something that I can see happening here, but on a smaller

scale. Athletes have one of the toughest jobs on campus. While it might not seem like it to the average person, it's true, especially at a school like Truman. For these athletes there is no free time, there is no time to take a much needed four-hour nap. It is a full time job, and for 99 percent of the athletes, it is a job that quickly is running out. Truman is not a school where athletes come with the expectation that they will play at the next level. Truman is a place where athletes come to play for four more years because they absolutely love the game.

I speak from experience. I am a baseball player who will never get to play baseball past high school. And that knowledge is tough to deal with at times. So when I see athletes around campus, I don't see them as "jocks." I see people who are following dreams for as long as they can follow them.

Athletes are not dumber than everyone else, or only here because they can play the sport they play. They deserve just as much respect as the kids who are here to be doctors or lawyers or politicians because, in a way, they are the same. The kids who are here to be doctors or lawyers are following their passions, too.

So when Richard Sherman speaks his mind a little too aggressively, or athletes here are looked down upon when they miss classes for games, it is ridiculous to judge them. They are people just like you and me, and often have to work harder than we do to get the same thing.

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To be eligible for these positions, applicants must have at least a 3.0 Cumulative GPA and cannot take summer classes while working in the program. Individuals hired for these programs will be required to complete a criminal background check.

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