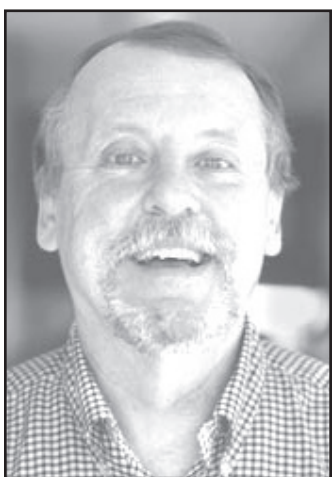


Gran Makes Plans For UK's Upcoming Season



Former UK football standout Jacob Tamme, who now plays for the Atlanta Falcons, and his wife take great pride in Swings for Soldiers Classic, a golf fundraiser they started seven years ago to build specially adapted homes for wounded veterans. (Blue 6 Media Photo)



Larry Vaught

New Kentucky offensive coordinator Eddie Gran got to see UK's returning players practice and scrimmage in April. Now he's busy contemplating plans for the upcoming season as well as figuring out how to best use his returning players while projecting how new players might figure into the playing rotations.

Gran came to UK from Cincinnati where he led a successful offense. He also brought quarterbacks coach Darin Hinshaw with him.

Recently Gran sat down to talk about lies ahead for the Cats this summer as well as some specific players.

Question: What do during the summer to learn more about your players?

Gran: "We get an opportunity now to be with our players out there in the summer at certain times. Now we can go out there and coach a little bit and instruct with no footballs out there. During the spring we had to get them to know what to do. Now going into August camp you have to detail all the fundamentals. Each position has drills to work on individually to improve."

Question: Did you learn specific things about individual players in spring practice that help you make summer changes?

Gran: "Each coach met with each player after the springs and evaluate all things to work on. For offensive lineman, might be pass set versus speed rusher. Each individual has three things we give them to work on during the summer given to them by their position

coach so we can get better."

Question: For a player like senior running back JoJo Kemp who says he wants to be more of a vocal leader, are you seeing signs of that?

Gran: "I think so. JoJo has to understand when it is work time and when it is play time. That's the one thing I talked to him about. He is vocal and confident, which is good. But you also have to act like a pro and act like you have been there. That's what we are learning to do and he is getting better at that and should be a great leader for us."

Question: Kemp has had that same issue for three years of not always being serious, so is that his personality that he can't keep help himself?

Gran: "I think you can control whatever comes out of your mouth any way you want. You choose to do that. JoJo just has to change and I think he did a great job during spring practice. He got to know me and I got to know him. Just got to feel each other out and figure it out. He understands now when laughing time is good and when laughing time is not good."

Question: How do you feel overall about the running backs?

Gran: "I think we are deep and have a lot of guys that are competing. I know nothing about Boom Williams, so right now the ones I am counting on are the ones I had this spring. Boom is rehabbing and doing everything he is supposed to do, so we will see. It will be wide open, but I like it because they are competing every day and they are trying to get on the field."

Question: How do you and quarterback coach Darin Hinshaw seem to stay on the same page?

Gran: "We complement each other in a lot of ways but what we do is communicate. There is never something being said out of his mouth or my mouth that is different to the quarterback, offensive line. Everybody is on the same page. Being with other really great co-

ordinators, that's what you have to do. John Schlarman saying same things we are. If you are doing that, then you have a chance."

Question: Why leave a program going so well at Cincinnati for UK? Is this a career gamble for you?

Gran: "It doesn't matter where you are at in this profession. It was the right time to be with a great man in Mark Stoops. I think what they have done the last four years has been unbelievable. I am coming in at a great time. They are hungry. They have had some unfortunate situations. They know they were close to winning a lot more games. Whatever it takes to get to the next step is what we are going to try and do. But to me, it is not a gamble. To me, it is a great opportunity."

Question: Has your perception of Kentucky football changed in the last six months?

Gran: "The whole program just in terms of this community and how much they love football... I guess the perception is basketball school. I am finding out this is a big-time football school also. The people love football and they support it. That excites me. The administration has done a phenomenal job doing what it did with stadium. Now a new complex to move into. Football going the right direction."

Question: Do you have fourth-quarter playmakers that can win games?

Gran: "We have to make plays in the fourth quarter for sure, but we have to make the routine plays. Offense is about execution. If you are not disciplined and do all the little things right, that is going to separate us. You can't be in games with great teams in our league if you turn the ball over, have false starts, have holding penalties, if don't execute on third down, if you don't make plays on third down. You are not going to win if you do those things. That's what we are really making sure we hone in on about being a more disciplined offense. That is anywhere. I am sure that is what (former

offensive coordinator) Shannon (Dawson) was preaching last year. You have to be disciplined. That's the message. You can't wish it, think it and hope it. You have to get it done every day. That is when you win. We have the ability."

Praise For Freshmen

Kentucky assistant coach John Robic is not one to get overly excited praising players, especially those who have yet to play a game for the Wildcats. That's why hearing how Robic praised UK's freshman class last week was so impressive.

"We've gotten to know them through the recruiting process, and it's great that they're all here. They're a great group of young men that are really, really talented," Robic said. "Very, very athletic. We have really good size with this group that is in here right now. You can really tell a difference in the size of our team with the addition of this freshman class."

"What it's done is it's made the workouts and the practices much more competitive, especially near the rim. I think it's going to help us become, again, another staple of what we have is a really, really good defensive team because of how long we are and that we'll be able to challenge a lot more things at the rim. You have good speed, really good skill, and it's a fine group to watch so far."

That group is considered the No. 1 recruiting class in the country with five five-star prospects. De'Aaron Fox and Malik Monk are 6-3, Bam Adebayo and Wenyen Gabriel are 6-9 and Sacha Killeya-Jones is 6-10. I

"I think they're getting acclimated with how Coach wants to play and how we like to play. I think the speed of the game is different. They're all playing well right now. They've only been here - this is just their third week coming up. Just really working on individual stuff right now and sort of getting into the flow of how we want to play. We mainly do offensive things at this point and time, but the one thing I can tell you without singling anybody out is it's really competitive and that's something we're really encouraged by," Robic said.

Jacob Tamme

Jacob Tamme has had a lot of notable moments during his high school, college and professional football career. He's won state high school championships, helped Kentucky win bowl games and played in the Super Bowl twice.

I've known Tamme going back to his Little League athletic days in Danville and have taken great pride in following his athletics career. It's also why it is so easy to tell how proud he is of Swings for Soldiers Classic, a golf scramble fundraiser Tamme and his wife, Allison, put together seven years ago to raise money to build homes for veterans injured serving our country.

"This is our baby and what we created," said Tamme.

His "baby" will be July 18 at the University Club of Kentucky just outside Lexington. The previous six events have raised over \$500,000 to help build specially adapted homes for severely wounded veterans and their families.

The Swings for Soldiers Classic has grown far more than the Tammes ever imagined when they started.

"We made it happen that first year and we did everything from making every phone call to printing cart signs on our computer at home," Tamme said. "We were out there at 5 in the morning to putting out hold signs and the day lasted until 11 p.m. It was a long



Offensive coordinator Eddie Gran (left) says he has found out that Kentucky is a "big-time football school" since joining Mark Stoops' staff. (Larry Vaught/Verizon Photo)

day, but awesome day. Still, I wasn't sure we could ever do this again."

That changed before he left the golf course. He was walking out with his wife along with Chase Matthews, a wounded veteran with two prosthetic legs, and his wife.

"I am thinking this went great but I am mentally and physically exhausted. I just did not know if we could ever do this again. We had our own family," Tamme said. "Then Chase looked up from his wheelchair and said, 'Hey Jacob, next year I am going to play in this things.' Small words can create a big change."

Not A Fan Of Camps

Kentucky coach Mark Stoops made it clear he was

not a fan of satellite camps earlier this summer.

"People can do whatever the heck they want to do. I'm not going to get involved with third parties and pay people to have camps to recruit one player or two players. I'm not going to do that," said Stoops.

Nothing wrong with that, either. In fact, I agree.

But guess what? Recent Kentucky verbal commit Josh Ali, a three-star receiver from Hollywood, Fla., got the attention of Stoops at a satellite camp in Florida. He committed to UK even though he's never been to Lexington (he plans a visit later this month).

He had 56 catches for 865 yards and 15 scores last year.



Bam Adebayo is one of the freshmen players that has Kentucky assistant coach John Robic already excited about next season. (McDonald's All-American Photo)

SUMMER MEALS FOR KIDS & TEENS

LUNCH
WEDNESDAYS
12:00-1:00
MT. CARMEL
CHRISTIAN
CHURCH
180 FURNACE JCT
RAVENNA

FRIENDS, FUN & FOOD

TEXT FOOD TO 877-877 FOR MORE SITE INFO