

Two from Estill County graduate from Rogers Explorers program

Thirty-one students graduate from The Center for Rural Development's 2019 Rogers Explorers program at Union College, and another 31 graduated from the same program at Morehead State University. The programs were held in July on each of the respective campuses.

Rogers Explorers is open to eighth-grade middle school students within The Center's 45-county primary service area who have a strong interest in developing their skills in leadership, team building, community service, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) fields of study.

Each graduate of the Rogers Explorers

program received a \$1,000 college scholarship offer from Union College.

The Center selected a total of 211 students from throughout the region to attend this year's Rogers Explorers program. Participants spend three days and two nights on a leading Kentucky college campus where experts guide them through hands-on assignments to help build their leadership skills and explore different career pathways.

Addison Beard, a student at Estill County Middle School, attended the program at Union College. She is the daughter of Tonya Beard and Chad Beard of Irvine. Alyssa Muncie, also a student at ECMS, attended

the program at Morehead State University. She is the daughter of Amanda H. Muncie and Derrick L. Muncie of Irvine. Photos of Addison and Alyssa are at right on Page 15.

"For most of these students, this is the first time they will experience life on a college campus setting and to seriously begin thinking about different career choices before they enter their freshman year in high school," said Lonnie Lawson, President and CEO of The Center. "We want to give students the knowledge and tools they need to discover their career pathways and to plan for the future. Congratulations to all of our

Rogers Explorers graduates."

The Rogers Explorers program is presented by The Center in partnership with Union College, Asbury University, Lindsey Wilson College, University of the Cumberland, Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, and the University of Pikeville. The program is provided tuition-free to applicants who meet the eligibility requirements.

For more information about Rogers Explorers, call 606-677-6000 or email Allison Cross at across@centertech.com. Visit centeryouthprograms.com to learn more about the program.

Kenneth Horsey Kept The Faith Despite Heart Issues, Now Ready To Show What He Can Do



by Larry Vaught

He says he was 100 percent healthy last season but also admits he lost strength after having open heart surgery just a few months before he arrived on the University of Kentucky campus.

"I wasn't able to perform the best I could last year. I am 100 percent healthy now and ready to go and play and show these coaches what I can do," said redshirt freshman offensive guard Kenneth Horsey of Sanford, Fla.

It's unusual for an 18-year-old athlete to need open heart surgery and Horsey said family support and prayers, including those from Kentucky fans, helped get him through the scary ordeal and go through last season.

But did he really believe everything was going to be okay health-wise last year or was he just hoping it would be?

"Wow. That's a hard question. The only thing I can really say is that the last year God has been teaching me about patience," Horsey said. "He has shown me how to be able to stay down and wait for my time.

"I really feel like now my time has come. I just got to ... it's just one of those things you pray about and just have to have faith that God is going to bring you out. Whatever tests he brought you and put you in, he's going to get you out of it. That's

all I can say."

The UK lineman will still need an electrocardiogram every six months or so just to make everything is still okay with his heart.

"But I am 100 percent, ready to go and ready to show BBN what I can do on the field this year," he said.

His mother, Shari, still calls or texts him daily to check on him. Horsey says he doubts she'll ever stop doing that.

"If you have met my mom, you will understand how she is. She might say she is not checking as much on me, but she is going to Mom out every now and then," the UK redshirt freshman said. "I don't think anybody in the world could stop my mom from worrying. Everything that happened probably impacted her more than it did me.

"Seeing your son go through something like that ... it was hard for all of us. They (his parents) don't worry about me as much. They know I am in good hands with the trainers and staff. We all know the coaching staff and athletic trainers have my best interests at heart and if I can play, I'm going to play."

Certainly his position coach, John Schlarman, is going to look after him because for the last year Schlarman has been receiving chemotherapy treatments after being diagnosed with cancer. Horsey said Schlarman's courage helped him keep his own struggles in perspective.

"You still have to remember how good you have it. Just being able to watch coach Schlarman was amazing. Sometimes I would even forget he was going through what he did because he would never change. It was inspiring and still is," Horsey said.

"You can ask anybody, he never changed. Every time he could be there, he was there with us and he was always smiling. He was always ready to go and always pumped. He brought that energy every day."

Schlarman says Horsey is an "amazing story" to have had open heart surgery in April of his high school senior season and then be in full pads last fall.

"As a parent of four, that amazed me that he got to that point and that they (doctors) were confident he could do that. When we sat down after the season, everybody wants to contribute right away when they get here and it is always a little bit of a disappointment when they come in and redshirt like he did. It's humbling," Schlarman said.

"The thing we discussed is how much of a success story he was even though he didn't play the game. The fact that he practiced and got himself in shape. He came in probably 330 (pounds) and right now is about 317 and looking really good. He has a lot of room for improvement just because he went through all he went through last year.

"That's all behind him and he is building on just being healthy. I am excited about what he could do for us down the line and hopefully as early as this year."

Ask anyone who has seen Kentucky freshman basketball player Kahlil Whitney play and they are likely to talk about the high motor he always has when he plays and his incredible athleticism that can turn heads no matter who he's playing with or against.

"Seeing how the greats were successful at getting to their spots and having that dog mentality impressed

me. All the great players do that. I expend all my energy being very aggressive and get the best out of that. That's what gets my game going," Whitney, who grew up with former Wildcat Anthony Davis as his favorite player, said.

During some AAU games, Whitney made plays that sometimes had everyone in the gym watching.

"It is just God-given ability and talent. God gave me great athletic ability and I can block shots, go to the other end and dunk. I notice it when the crowd is roaring and I can barely hear myself speak. It is amazing. I really like that," Whitney said.

He could have Big Blue fans screaming a lot this year, especially since his physical presence could have him even playing some power forward if coach John Calipari goes with a smaller lineup.

"The first time I went to Rupp Arena for Big Blue Madness it was crazy. They sold out for that. It was an experience like no other," Whitney said. "Coach (Calipari) talks about big-time games and how the crowd will be. I like interacting with the crowd and getting momentum. You have to know how to handle that."

He's learning just how passionate Kentucky fans can be from social media and has been recognized often by fans since his arrival at UK in June.

"When I was a kid I wanted that. I would take pictures with Jabari Parker and all those guys," Whitney said. "If people want to take pictures of me or get an autograph, I love it. I'll take it

every day.

"If I have to take an hour to sign autographs, I will take an hour. It's amazing to have people look up to you and aspire to be like you. That's a huge honor I don't take lightly."

Whitney says he is a family-oriented person - has a sister and two brothers - and likes to spend time around the house watching Netflix, paying Fortnite or just hanging out.

"I am a jokester, a clown. I like making people laugh and stuff like that. I am just a fun guy," Whitney said. A lot of people don't know that I play the drums. I just like to put a smile on your face any way I can."

Like UK teammate Emmanuel Quickley, Whitney says he played drums in his church as a kid.

"I started off with a bongo (drum) when I was in church. After that when I was old enough to stay on rhythm, I took drum classes. I used to play at church on Sundays with the choir and stuff like that and really liked it," he said.

When her daughter, Maci Morris, was a huge hit with fans at the Ohio UK Convention, it was no surprise to Patti Morris.

"We go places and teenagers and kids just mob her at the malls, so I am kind of used to it," Patti Morris said. "It's always nice to see she is appreciated. The fans who have watched her, it's great. She is a tremendous person and they see that. They love her."

Morris was sensational her four years at UK after earning Miss Basketball

honors at Bell County High School. She's now getting ready to embark on a professional career in Italy.

"When you are at Kentucky you are surrounded by so many fans and you have people come up to you all the time and show and explain how much they love Kentucky basketball and watching you play and things like that," Maci Morris said. "It's a blessing and I am so appreciative of all the fans. I wouldn't say I am surprised any more by the attention from fans because they were great the whole time I was at Kentucky."

Morris could have left UK after her freshman season when numerous players and assistant coaches left for various reasons. Instead, she stayed and became an all-SEC player.

"I was thinking about that today when she was talking. That took guts to do that. Loyalty," Patti Morris said. "Probably more fans appreciate what she did than she knows. It speaks to her character but she is that kind of person to stick with you. When the going gets tough, she will be there for you."

"I don't think she really knows how beloved she is by fans. She probably has not had time to reflect on that yet but I can see everywhere how much the fans do love her and that means a lot to me."

If you are a Maci Morris fan, she has her own sports apparel brand now. The logo - designed by former UK teammate Mackenzie Cann - looks like the mountains to reflect Morris' eastern Kentucky roots.

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