

Cook happy to give back to hometown



Former Kansas State wide receiver and quarterback Kody Cook works with a camper in a footwork drill during the Kansas Gridiron Greats Football Camp on Saturday at Louisburg High School. Cook, an LHS graduate, came back to his hometown to run the camp along with former K-State players Tramaine Thompson, Morgan Burns and Chris Harper.

Area youth gathered on the Louisburg High School practice football field Saturday to learn the sport from a few former Kansas State football players who have played in some pretty big games.

One of those players competed in a few large games in Louisburg history as well.

LHS and Kansas State graduate Kody Cook returned home as the Kansas Gridiron Greats Football Camp made a stop in Louisburg. Former K-State football players Tramaine Thompson, Morgan Burns and Chris Harper joined Cook to help teach the young players how to compete on the football field, and in life.

“It was a good time,” Cook said. “It was the first time I have been able to come back in a long time and being on the field really brought back a lot of memories. I got to talk to the high school kids about what is getting ready to happen this season and try to help them out in any way I can. Plus, seeing

the little kids laugh and smile a lot – it was just a good time and it was great to give back.”

Athletes from kindergarten all the way up through high school had a chance to learn from the four K-State players. Each player conducted position specific drills such as passing and catching and also defensive drills.



Tramaine Thompson holds the bag as he teaches a camper how to run through contact.

Cook then had a chance to talk to the athletes and tell them his story of perseverance. His story of quarterbacking Louisburg to a state title in high school, not getting many big college offers and eventually landing in junior college.

It was during his time at Hutchinson Community College where he saw time as a wide receiver just so he could get on the field. Then during his final game at Hutch in the Salt City Bowl, Cook was asked to come in and quarterback the Blue Dragons without taking any snaps at the position all season.

Cook came in and played like a veteran as he recorded six touchdowns in three quarters on his way to being named the game's MVP and K-State took notice. He earned a spot as a walk-on the next season and eventually made his way onto

scholarship as one of the team's wide receivers.



Morgan Burns works with an older group of players on a defensive drill.

It was a bit of déjà vu for him during his senior season at K-State as he saw several snaps at quarterback for the Wildcats due to an injury and Cook eventually became just the third player in Big 12 history with 100 yards passing, rushing and receiving in the same season.

The story is one Cook loves to tell. Not to gloat on his own accomplishments, but to give kids hope that their dreams can come true.

“I just told them to push through adversity and to never give up in life,” Cook said. “Just because you are from a small town doesn’t mean you can’t do something that you put your mind to. Everything is earned through hard work and dedication. I know it sounds cliché, but that is what it boils down to at the end of the day. I know there are plenty of guys in the NFL right now that outwork people instead of necessarily being more talented.”

Following the completion of the camp, Cook also met with some members of the LHS football team and gave them some advice on how to prepare for the upcoming season and enjoy the ride.

“Hopefully these high school kids just cherish these moments,” Cook said. “I have played at K-State and done things in front of thousands of people, but every memory I have had of football, my favorite ones are playing here and under the Friday night lights.

“Winning a state championship with all those guys that you grew up with is just special. It is not to say those K-State memories don’t mean a lot, because they do, but the high school ones are the ones that stick with you.”

Saturday was the final day in what was a busy week for Cook. Along with Thompson, Harper and Burns, he conducted camps for six straight days that included stops in Wichita, Newton, Osborne, Topeka and Garden City.

“It has been a lot of fun,” Cook said. “It has been pretty crazy but it has been good to stop at different places and see how people do things. I just enjoy getting a chance to talk to the kids and let them know they can achieve whatever their dream is if they work hard for it.



LHS grad Kody Cook talks to a group of current Wildcat football players and gives them some advice on their upcoming season.

Cook is looking to heed his own advice as he is still looking

to accomplish his ultimate dream, which is to play in the NFL. Despite not getting invited to a team's minicamp, he is still working out in hopes of one day getting a shot to do what he loves.

Till then, Cook is hoping to earn a graduate assistant job with the K-State football program and possibly tryout for the Canadian Football League in March.

"One of the things I want to do is coach, so hopefully I can get that opportunity," Cook said. "At the same time, I still want to prove that I am good enough to play and maybe something works out up in the Canadian league. I am just going to work as hard as I can and see where that takes me."