

## Curry Sexton – Cody Whitehair

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

The home team is behind by one point with just over two minutes to play. A conference victory and eligibility for a bowl game are on the line, but it doesn't look good for the home team. They have the ball, but way back at their own 32 yard line. These are the types of games and close finishes which make football so exciting. Today we'll meet a couple of young men from rural Kansas who have been a part of such games and who have taken their football experience to a higher level. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Curry Sexton and Cody Whitehair are two key players on the K-State football team. They both played together at Abilene High School. Jeff Geist was their coach at Abilene.

"The thing that struck me about Curry was his intelligence and understanding of the game," Coach Geist said. "Even as a freshman, he understood what we were doing."

At Abilene High School, Curry played as a free safety, flanker, and quarterback. "He's extremely fast and talented, and he had unbelievable vision of the field," Coach Geist said. "In his junior year, the first two plays of the year were broken plays, but he was able to run both of them in more than 40 yards for touchdowns." Wow.

His skill made him a highly touted player in the state of Kansas and his intelligence made him a candidate for academic success. In fact, he had an opportunity to go to Harvard, but chose to stay closer to home and live the dream of playing college football at K-State. His younger brother Collin has now joined Curry on the K-State roster as well.

Cody Whitehair is one year younger than Curry Sexton. Unlike Curry, who stands 5-11 and weighs 183 pounds, Cody stands a brawny 6-4 and weighs 309 pounds. But it isn't his size which Coach Geist brings up first.

"Cody has tremendous athletic ability," Coach Geist said. "He had flexibility and mobility for a big kid that is phenomenal." Cody played on the offensive line in high school just as he is doing at K-State, but he also demonstrated some pass-catching ability.

"We would put him at tight end in certain situations," Coach Geist said. "In his sophomore year, he caught the winning two point conversion pass over Concordia."

At the college level, Cody has excelled as an offensive lineman. In his first year, he was named a freshman All-American by Phil Steele, ESPN.com All-Big 12 team, and honorable mention All-Big 12 honors from the league's coaches. In his sophomore campaign, he moved up to become a member of the All-Big 12 second team.

It is exciting to find two such excellent players who came from the same school in rural Kansas. The Sextons and Cody Whitehair grew up together, hunting and fishing in Dickinson County. Cody used to spend time on his uncle's farm which is in southeast Dickinson County near the rural community of Hope, population 366 people. Now, that's rural.

"They are great kids and great football players," Coach Geist said.

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That was the scenario on November 16 when Kansas State was playing TCU in Manhattan. TCU had just taken the lead on a long field goal with two minutes and 13 seconds to play. Following a good kickoff return, K-State was still set back at its own 32 yard line. After an incomplete pass, K-State's quarterback threw over the middle. It was Curry Sexton who made a leaping catch for a 28 yard gain. After a couple more short passes, the field goal kicker came in and made the winning field goal with just seconds to play. We commend Curry Sexton, Cody Whitehair, and all small town Kansas football players for making a difference by representing their communities so well at a higher level of football.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.