

# Small town football player moves to Big 12

By Ron Wilson, director  
Huck Boyd  
Kansas State University

What's your specialty? There is a lot to be said for specialization. Even football teams use it. Players compete for certain positions, of course, and those doing punting and kicking are specifically called specialists.

But in life, specialization should not come at the expense of gaining a broad diversity of experience. Small town schools, for example, may not be able to provide every specialty, but they are often excellent at providing their students a variety of experiences.

Today we'll celebrate rural education by meeting an athlete who experienced the benefits of small town life and is now making his mark in Big 12 football.

Ian Campbell is the pride of Cimarron. He played football for the Bluejays of Cimarron High School. Cimarron is a wonderful small town, located between Dodge City and Garden City. Ian's father is the long-time district attorney there, and his mother works as a paralegal in his father's office. Ian also has five brothers and sisters.

Ian says, "I had a blast growing up. It's like the total community raises all the kids, because everybody knows everybody and everybody works together. It was a great experience for me."

"Growing up in a small town teaches kids responsibility and accountability and hard work. These are lessons directly related to

life." In the summers, Ian worked on ranches and for his brother's construction company.

But as noted earlier, students in small towns have to do a lot of things to keep up all the school activities.

For example, Ian set the all-time career tackle record for Cimarron, but he also lettered three years in basketball.

Sports and school spirit are especially important in those rural communities. Ian says, "The towns really get behind the teams. It gives folks lots to talk about down at the coffee shop."

After Ian graduated from high school, he wanted to continue playing.

He talked to various collegiate football programs including the local community college, but felt he could play at the Division I level. He finally decided to come to K-State as a walk-on.

After redshirting in 2004, he played as a defensive end in the 2005 season. Then, as he says modestly, "Things clicked in 2006."

In fact, things clicked so well that he became consensus first team All-Big 12 in 2006 and was named the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year by the Houston Chronicle. He followed that up with another All-Big 12 year in 2007.

Now he is back for his senior season, and he says the sky's the limit for this team. But whatever happens, he will remember his rural roots. After all, Cimarron is a community of 1,939 people. Now,

that's rural.

There is a long tradition of Kansas small towns producing big time athletes. Nolan Cromwell and John Riggins are two examples of small town Kansas football players who would go on to make their mark on the national sports stage.

K-State Head Coach Ron Prince recognizes the value of the small town upbringing.

Coach Prince says, "Growing up in a certain size community,

each young man or woman feels a need to contribute to their school or their hometown. They're not just specializing in a single sport, they may be in some sort of sport year-round.

Plus they're involved in 4-H and FFA, and chorale and helping out with harvest. Our small town students and players sometimes come with more breadth and depth of experiences."

As a new school year and a new football season begin, let's cel-

ebate our rural schools and our small town athletes. Let's support our local teams and also support the variety of experiences in our schools which help our students to learn life's lessons.

What's your specialty? While specialization can have many advantages, there are also benefits which derive from the wide variety of experiences which students like Ian Campbell found in a rural Kansas school.

We salute Ian Campbell and

all rural athletes and students for making a difference by participating in a variety of experiences in their schools. I think such variety helps make rural education extra special.

*Editor's note: The mission of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development is to enhance rural development by helping rural people help themselves. For information about the Huck Boyd Institute, visit [www.oznet.ksu.edu/huckboyd/](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/huckboyd/).*

## University decides fate of mooning debate coach

WICHITA (AP) — Fort Hays State University says it will announce today what it will do with its controversial debate coach whose profanity-laced tournament debate was posted on YouTube.

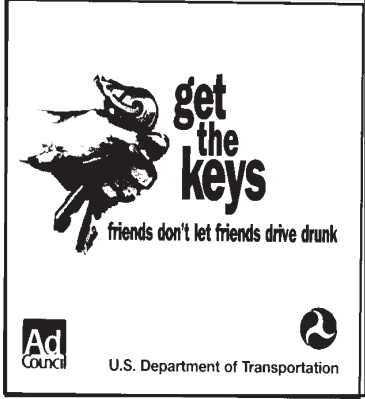
The incident at a Wichita tournament in March received nationwide attention after it was posted on YouTube on Aug. 2. In the clip, debate coach William Shanahan pulled down his shorts and exposed his underwear at one point in the debate.

University officials are keeping mum about their decision until the news conference.

Shanahan declined to comment on it until after today's of-

ficial announcement.

He says he was not invited to the news conference.



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