

**Directions: Read the article below and MAKE AT LEAST TEN ANNOTATIONS. Then write a summary of the text at the bottom of the article.**

## **KU's Bill Self uses Jamari Traylor's story as inspiration for basketball campers**

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By RUSTIN DODD

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Kansas basketball fans might know Jamari Traylor's story by now, the story of a lonely year on the south side of Chicago, living in abandoned buildings, sleeping in rusted-out cars, the windy city cold numbing the life from Traylor's striking brown eyes.

Traylor felt like life meant nothing. His father was imprisoned. His future was in peril. And high school was a place he went to find a rare meal, a few hours of respite from the continual hunger.

"I didn't have a shoulder to really lean," Traylor says.

You might know what Traylor's life is like now. Entering his third season as a power forward in the KU basketball program. About to see one of his best friends, Ben McLemore, taken in the top five of this month's NBA Draft.

Traylor and McLemore like to go to restaurants in Lawrence and make goofy videos while they gorge on pancakes and all the sustenance needed to be a Division I basketball player.

"That's a lot of syrup!" McLemore will shout. And then both players will double over laughing.

This life, Traylor says, is a whole lot different.

Every so often, Self and Traylor will talk about his past and how far he's come. There's a special connection there, built on trust and love, and sometimes, Self will go out of his way to make sure Traylor knows that he believes in him.

"That's just Coach Self," Traylor says. "He knows me."

"I've never been prouder of one kid that I've ever coached," Self will say.

Monday was one of those days. Self welcomed his first group of basketball campers on campus this week. And after some thinking, Self decided that the kids needed to hear Traylor's story. More than that, though, he decided that Traylor could benefit from standing in front of a group of 800 young basketball players.

So Traylor took the mic, answering questions for a few minutes, before Self stepped in and drove the point home. These kids see the finish product. They see the kid who was taken in by a Chicago coach named Loren

Jackson, who reconciled with his mother, Tracey Golson, who signed with KU after just two years of high school basketball.

But they didn't see the struggle.

"You know what a bad day for him was," Self said. "A little bit different than us. We have a bad day when our coach puts us on the bench; or we have a bad day when our parents get onto us, and we don't like what they have to say, even though we know they're right."

"Those are bad days. Try going three or four days without eating. That's a real bad day."

For a moment, Traylor fought back tears. And Self continued his story.

"It's good to share that with the kids," Traylor would say later. "It's just sometimes, you just get emotional talking about it. It's crazy that little kids look up to me, and that my life could inspire other people."

Traylor's story will continue this coming season, when he'll have the opportunity to earn major minutes for the first time. After taking an academic redshirt during the 2011-12 season, Traylor averaged 2.9 points in 9.6 minutes last season in a reserve role.

Self likes to say that Traylor is still learning how to play basketball. For Traylor, life got in the way, and he played just one season of high school basketball in Chicago before finishing his high school career at IMG Academy in Florida.

By Self's count, last season was just Traylor's third season of competitive basketball, and his raw skills have yet to catch up to his freakish, fast-twitch athleticism.

"Offensively, he's got to get better to where he can score consistently," Self says. "You guys have seen Jamari. He can be a great defender and obviously he's an exceptional athlete. He's just not real big for the position he plays."

"So he's gotta probably get a little more skilled, where he can step away from the basket and do some things."

For now, the Jayhawks' frontcourt looks crowded, with Traylor competing for minutes at the power forward spot with fellow sophomore Perry Ellis and senior transfer Tarik Black, who could also play center. Freshman center Joel Embiid and Landen Lucas will also battle for playing time, giving Self one of his deepest collections of post players in years.

"I wish the bonus was at 15 fouls instead of seven," Self says, "because we've got plenty of fouls to give — at least inside. We've got more depth than what we've had."

For Traylor, the summer goals include working his way to 230 pounds in the weight room and working on his short jumper.

"I think I got a lot of potential," Traylor said. "I haven't been playing that long. And with a good coach like (Self) teaching me, I know that I can do anything."

These days, that includes standing in front of a gym full of campers, talking about his past, sharing his story one more time.

“Some of the things I went through definitely made me a lot of tougher,” Traylor says. “And definitely made me a lot smarter. Anything I do, I definitely appreciate it.”