



Let us help you get the right coverage at the best rate possible & help you shrink your auto premium!

Sarah Duffer Dan McCloud Nancy Hickey

Click here to visit our Bowling Green agent's websites.

[Home](#) / [Sports](#) / [WKU Sports](#)

[https://www.bgdailynews.com/sports/wku/qb-thomas-brings-sturdy-frame-cannon-arm-to-hilltoppers/article\\_3dcdd183-086b-5f2f-9556-fba289360d0c.html](https://www.bgdailynews.com/sports/wku/qb-thomas-brings-sturdy-frame-cannon-arm-to-hilltoppers/article_3dcdd183-086b-5f2f-9556-fba289360d0c.html)

TOP STORY

WKU FOOTBALL

## QB Thomas brings sturdy frame, cannon arm to Hilltoppers

Former 4-star signee is going through first fall camp

BRAD STEPHENS [bstephens@bgdailynews.com](mailto:bstephens@bgdailynews.com) 58 min ago



Kevaris Thomas was a 6-foot high school sophomore when he hit his growth spurt.

One year later, the broad-shouldered quarterback from Lakeland, Fla., stood 6-4 and was one of the biggest players on the field.

“It got easier,” the Western Kentucky QB told the Daily News on Thursday after the Hilltoppers’ first fall practice. “I was over everyone.

“The size really helped me become more of a good player at the position. I got harder to bring down. I could see easier than I could before. My talent really came out after my sophomore year.”

Thomas brings a defensive end’s size to the quarterback position for WKU. He’s listed at 6-4 and 250 pounds on the team’s preseason roster, though he said last week he currently weighs 257.

The quarterback’s size was evident Thursday during a team practice period open to media. Flushed out of the pocket, Thomas tucked and ran toward the right sideline, where a defensive back confronted him. The DB contacted Thomas but simply bounced off him and fell to the ground.

“Oh, he’s got major physical skills,” quarterback Drew Eckels said. “He can throw the ball anywhere you need to. He can run the ball anywhere. He’s like (257), so he can run someone over. ...

“He can do whatever he wants.”

Thomas' lumbering running style is unique, but the freshman's cannon arm is his calling card. WKU coach Mike Sanford saw it last year when recruiting him at Lakeland High School.

"I wanted to see him uncork a ball," Sanford said. "It was effortless to see him throw the ball 70 yards. There was one play on his tape where you see him throw an off-balance throw literally 72 yards across the field."

Thomas was a team captain last year at Lakeland, leading the Dreadnaughts to the Florida state semifinals. The previous season, he combined for 19 passing and rushing touchdowns, taking his team all the way to the Class 6A state title game.

Thomas first played running back when he stepped onto a youth football field. At 6 years old, he asked his father if he could switch to QB, and he hasn't looked back since.

"After that first year, I liked it so much that I never decided to change it," Thomas said. "You're the man in charge. You've got to keep everybody in check. You've got to have a real good IQ to play the position."

"I always felt like I was good at it, but it got to the point where people started saying, 'You're going to be great.' So I was like, 'I've got to keep it up.'"

Thomas' growth spurt midway through high school enhanced his status as an FBS prospect. He earned four-star designation from 247 Sports, which ranked him No. 22 nationally among recruits at his position.

He earned reported scholarship offers from Colorado State, Florida Atlantic, Florida International, South Carolina, South Florida, Temple and WKU.

The decision came down to FIU, Temple and WKU, and Thomas chose the Hilltoppers. He became the highest-ranked high school signee to ink with WKU when he signed in December.

“They were my last offer,” Thomas said of the Tops. “They came on kind of late. They wanted me to come up and when I came up, it was like a real family.

“Everyone loved me – all the players and all the coaches. It wasn’t always about football. It was, ‘How’s the family doing? Are you good in school?’ They were trying to provide help. That’s what really brought me in.”

Thomas arrived on campus this summer and is going through his first fall camp before WKU kicks off its 2018 season Aug. 31 at Wisconsin.



The freshman said his first official college practice Thursday had both good and bad moments. He noted the differences between actual practices and the player-run workouts he went through in June and July.

“You’ve actually got to really compete,” Thomas said. “The coaches are there to get at you when you mess up. You’ve got to pay attention.”

Thomas is learning directly from quarterbacks coach Matthew Mitchell and Sanford, who helps with the Hilltoppers’ QBs.

Mitchell said he wants to see Thomas “continue to operate the offense” – taking what he’s learned in the meeting room onto the field.

Wide receiver Lucky Jackson said Thomas will go as far as his preparation takes him.

“He can throw it down the field,” Thomas said. “The dude literally has a cannon.

“The only thing left for him is just to really get in that playbook and learn the system. He needs to know it like the back of his hands. I don’t doubt his talent at all.”

Eckels, a redshirt senior, went into summer as WKU’s first-team quarterback. Barring an unforeseen development, he will start less than four weeks from now against the Badgers.

Sanford said Thursday he wants multiple QBs ready to play if need be. Thomas, redshirt sophomore Steven Duncan and redshirt freshman Davis Shanley join Eckels as scholarship quarterbacks on the Topper roster, and any of them could be called upon at some point this fall.

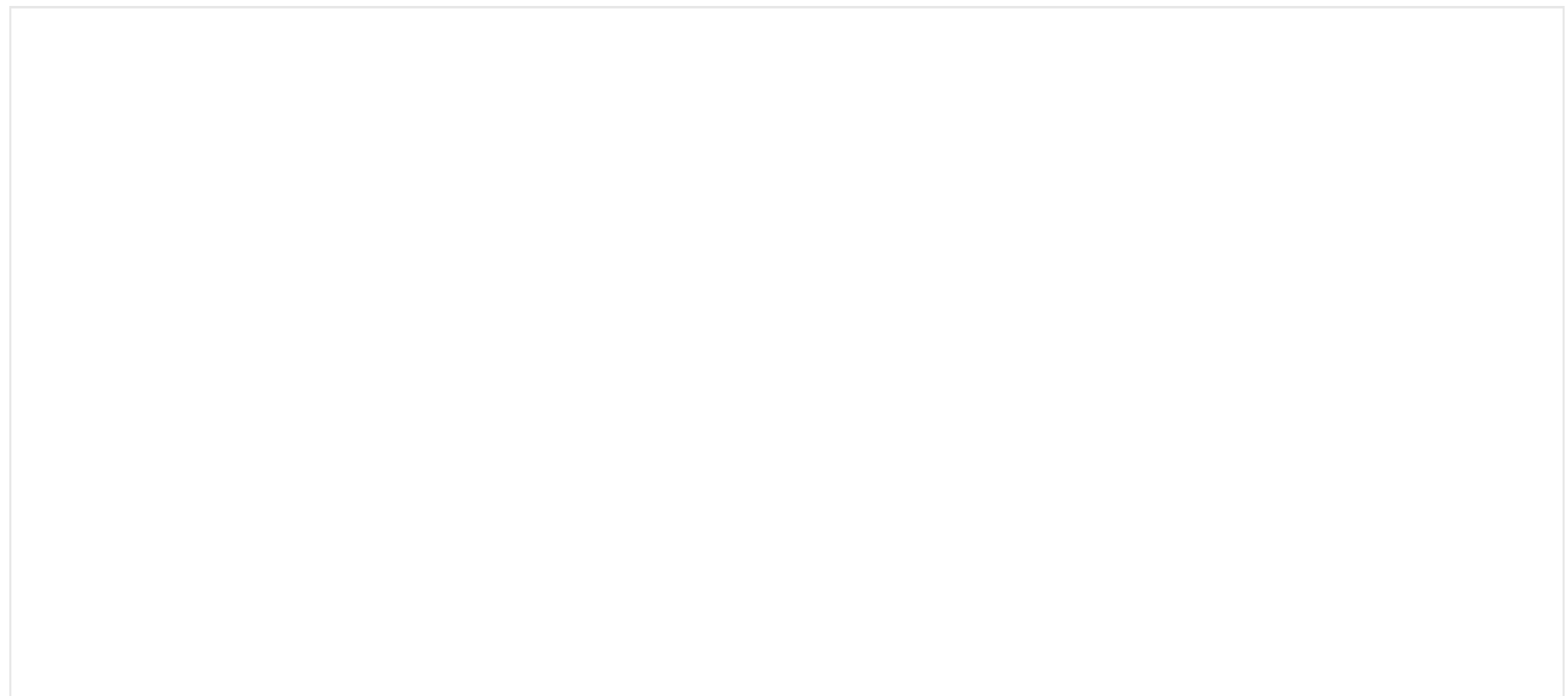
“Right now, I just want to improve,” Thomas said. “I want to understand everything.

“I do want to play, but I know that if I don’t pay attention and grasp everything, I know that my playing time will be limited. I just want to improve right now and if I see the field, I see it.”

---

– Follow Daily News sports reporter Brad Stephens on Twitter @BradBGDN or visit [bgdailynews.com](http://bgdailynews.com).

## MORE INFORMATION





Opponent preview: Louisiana Tech finally returns a starting QB

Opponent preview: New UTEP coach Dimel preaching positivity

Hilltopper QBs working to limit 'unacceptable' turnovers

For Sanford, lessons learned in Year 1 at WKU

Opponent preview: RB 'Motor' Singletary lives up to nickname for Florida Atlantic

Hilltoppers in 'dead sprint' to get ready for 2018 season

WR Jackson expected to 'set the tone' for Hilltopper offense

Opponent preview: Middle Tennessee QB Stockstill aims to follow father's footsteps

Opponent preview: Davis has FIU headed in right direction

Hilltopper OL Spencer ready for full-time starting role

**Ad**

Opponent preview: Dangerous KR Harper back for Old Dominion



**Brad Stephens**

Bowling Green Daily News sports reporter primarily covering Western Kentucky football and men's basketball.