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Petty sees first action as a Jayhawk

(Lawrence)- The No. 25 Kansas Jayhawks opened up their football season with a 49-3 victory over Northern Colorado on Saturday in front of a record opening game crowd at Memorial Stadium in Lawrence.

Former Liberal Redskin Reece Petty who is a walk-on red shirt junior on the KU football team saw his first action as a Jayhawk in Saturday's win as he lined up at wide receiver for a drive in the third quarter with the first team offense that is anchored by three year starter at quarterback Todd Reesing.

Petty was a 2006 graduate of LHS and started at wide receiver for the Redskins both his junior and senior years under Gary Cornelsen and Steve Warner. During Petty's sophomore year he was called up to varsity late in the season and played some on the offensive line as a blocking tight end. However, when Rich Anderson resigned just weeks before Petty's junior season, Cornelsen took over and moved Petty to receiver. Petty won the 'Outstanding Receiver Award' his senior year, along with the 'Southwest Daily Times Redskin Athlete of the year.'

Petty could have chosen to play at the community college level or possibly division two, but said at the time that he always wanted to play division one college football. So Petty had his high school highlights sent to several college football programs including KU, Colorado, K-State, and Wisconsin. Current defensive coordinator Clint Bowen who at the time wasn't the defensive coordinator, but was in charge of recruiting in the southwest Kansas area liked what he saw and had a meeting with Petty and his father Rex.

Bowen then contacted Petty a few weeks later to offer him a walk-on spot on the KU football team. Petty knew this was no guarantee that he would ever get to play a down at KU and that division one football is a lot of hard work. Petty decided to take the chance and chose to accept the walk-on offer.

Petty red-shirted his freshman year at KU and was on the scout team in 2007 and 2008 when KU won the Orange Bowl and the Insight Bowl. The past two years Petty did get to suit up on a few rare occasions, but never did get to play.

Things changed though as Petty began to prepare for his red-shirt junior season as he got to play in a good part of the spring game back in April of this year, even catching a few passes.

When practice began to kick off the 2009 season it was unknown where Petty would fit in at. However, not long into practice a depth chart was released by the KU football coaching staff to the media that included Petty as a current second team receiver.

Petty has been voted the 'nicest player on the team' two out of the past three years by his Jayhawk teammates in the KU football media guide.

Other notable players from Liberal who played football at KU include Doug Terry, who also played in the NFL for the Kansas City Chiefs; Al Shank who owns Al Shank Insurance in Liberal; Terry

Adams, who is the Technology Director at USD 480; and Trace Haskell, who is an assistant football coach at LaCrosse High School.

Kansas will next travel to El Paso, Texas on Saturday as they will play the UTEP Miners at 5 p.m. central time. The game will air on 1270 AM.

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