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KANSAS

## Mangino takes hall honor in stride: ‘I never took steroids ... Is that the criteria?’

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LAWRENCE — Mark Mangino, head coach of Kansas’ 2008 Orange Bowl champion team, entered the Chancellor’s Lounge of the Jayhawks’ Anderson Family Football Complex and prepared to sit next to Aqib Talib, cornerback of that Kansas team and who has since won a Super Bowl with the Denver Broncos.

“You’ve got your own table, coach,” Talib said Friday afternoon, pointing to a separate spot where the 61-year-old Mangino would address the media a day before his induction into the Kansas Athletics Hall of Fame, as well as the 2007 KU team’s induction and Talib and offensive lineman Anthony Collins’ entry into the football program’s Ring of Honor as well as the KU Hall.

“He’s got his own table?” Mangino responded, preparing to needle four-time Pro Bowler Talib. “His locker was a garbage can when he played here,” the coach added, laughing.

Indeed KU’s state-of-the art football complex opened in 2008, right after Talib left KU.

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Mangino — who had an overall record of 50-48 in eight seasons at Kansas (2002-09) — was in a fantastic mood on Friday and exhibited that mood during a 25-minute chat with reporters. The media session included vast praise for players and assistant coaches who directed the '07 Jayhawks to a 12-1 record and 24-21 Orange Bowl victory over Virginia Tech.

KU ascended as high as No. 2 in the national rankings that season.

“Everybody said we didn’t play Oklahoma or Texas. I’ve always said, ‘Lucky them,’” Mangino said. Back then, the Big 12 football teams split into divisions and KU did not play everyone in the league. “I thought that was our best team.”

Mangino started out serious then provided quite a punch line when asked what his emotions will be when he steps on the field to be acknowledged by the Jayhawk fans during Saturday’s 6 p.m. season opener against Southeast Missouri State at Memorial Stadium.

“I don’t know. I’m not a real sentimental person, but I value my experiences and appreciate them,” Mangino said. “I appreciate what they’ve done here, the new administration and everything. They’ve been good. They’ve reached out.

“Heck, I think I qualify to be in the Hall of Fame,” he added. “Shoot, I’m just a smidge over .500. I never took steroids. I never bet on football. Is that the criteria? So what the heck, right?” he asked.



Talib said it was a no-brainer for Mangino to be inducted individually into KU’s Athletic Hall.

“It had better happen. He coached us to the Orange Bowl, to the biggest championship of our time,” Talib said. “Guys fight. Guys get into it, man. But at the end of the day, he deserved to be honored, just like the team. He’s the reason why we were in the Orange Bowl. It’s only right for coach to be here.”



Former Kansas Jayhawks cornerback Aqib Talib talks about how coach Mark Mangino prepared him for the NFL. Talib spoke on Sept. 1, 2017, the day before his induction into KU football's Ring of Honor. **Jesse Newell** — The Kansas City Star

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Mangino incurred a forced resignation in 2009 when Lew Perkins was athletic director. Turner Gill was Mangino's replacement, followed by Charlie Weis. David Beaty, who was on Mangino's KU staff, is now third-year Jayhawk coach.

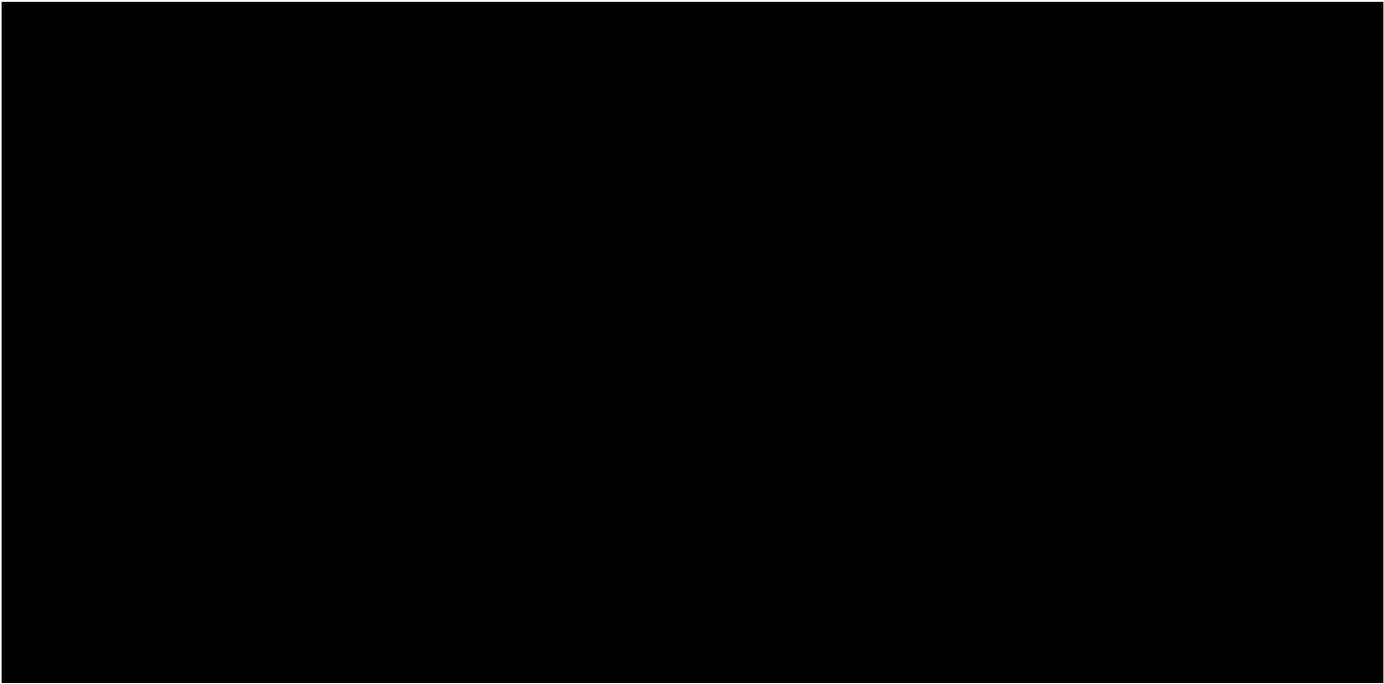
"Coach Mangino is one of my favorite coaches I've ever played for," said Talib, noting that the two have stayed close. Mangino and his wife, Mary Jane, in fact, attended Talib's wedding last year.

"We had great times. We had bad times, man," Talib said. "He made me mature a lot as a player. He's kind of like me as a coach. He doesn't bite his tongue. He tells you straight forward. Getting ready for the NFL, you need that. You don't need no one sugar-coating nothing for you and putting a Pamper on you and wiping your butt. You just need it straight forward, because that's how they're going to give it to you in the NFL.

"Coach Mangino did a great job getting me ready for the next level. I went through tough coaches. Jon Gruden, Bill Belichick. Getting prepared for the NFL by Mark Mangino, that definitely got me ready for coaches like Gruden and Bill."

Talib says he's personally thanked Mangino for preparing him for the pros.





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“Definitely. I told him. He could see it. He told me. ‘It’s why I’m doing it, I’m getting you ready for the next level. You’re going to be my first, first-round pick.’ He told me that out of his mouth, that you’re going to be my first, first-round pick. It was the truth. I was his first, first-round pick. We’ve been good ever since.”

Mangino returned the compliment to Talib.

“He was a great player here,” Mangino said. “I’m not surprised he’s a great player in the NFL. The thing about him ... the guy has a real zest for life. The guy will get you excited. He has a lot of energy. He’s the life of the party so to speak. What’s that they say, ‘A high tide lifts all boats?’ He’s a high tide.”

Mangino said he’s looking forward to visiting with players from the ’07 team on Saturday. He estimated that of the 500 contacts in his phone, “200 or so are from former players.”

“We liked it here,” Mangino said of Lawrence. “We had a lot of fun. Our coaches, our players. It’s a good place. It’s a real good place,” he added, his voice trailing off.

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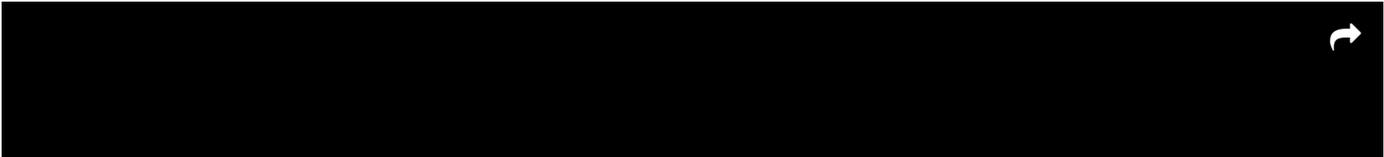
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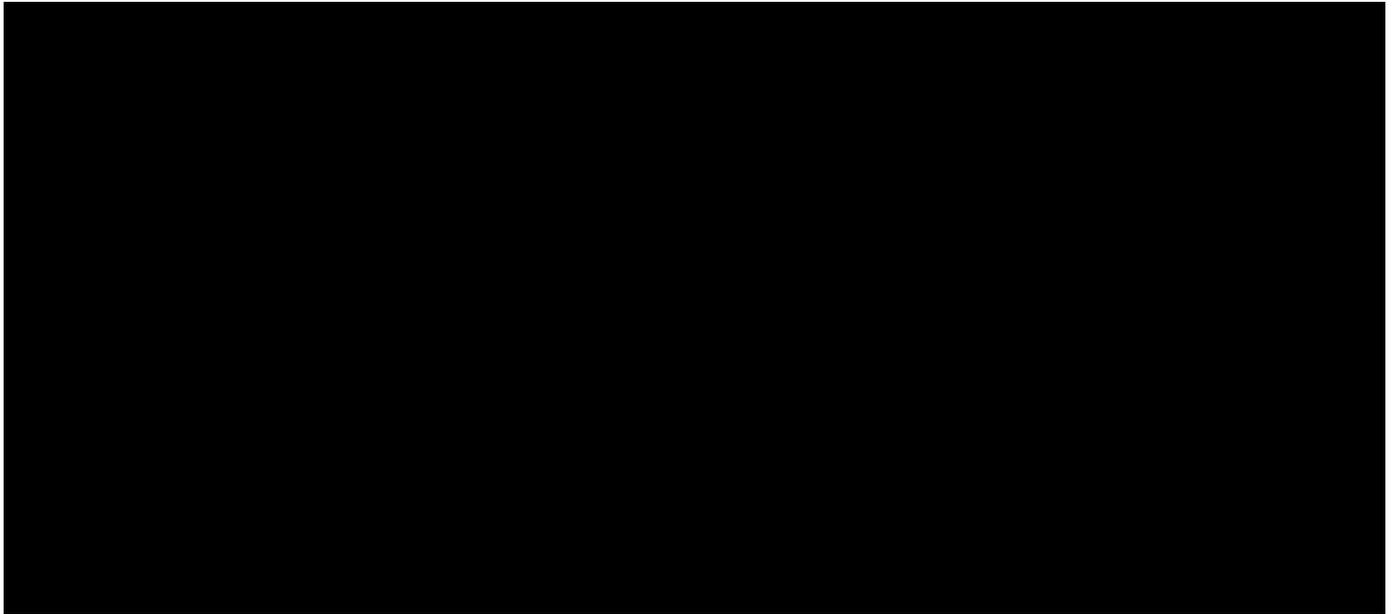
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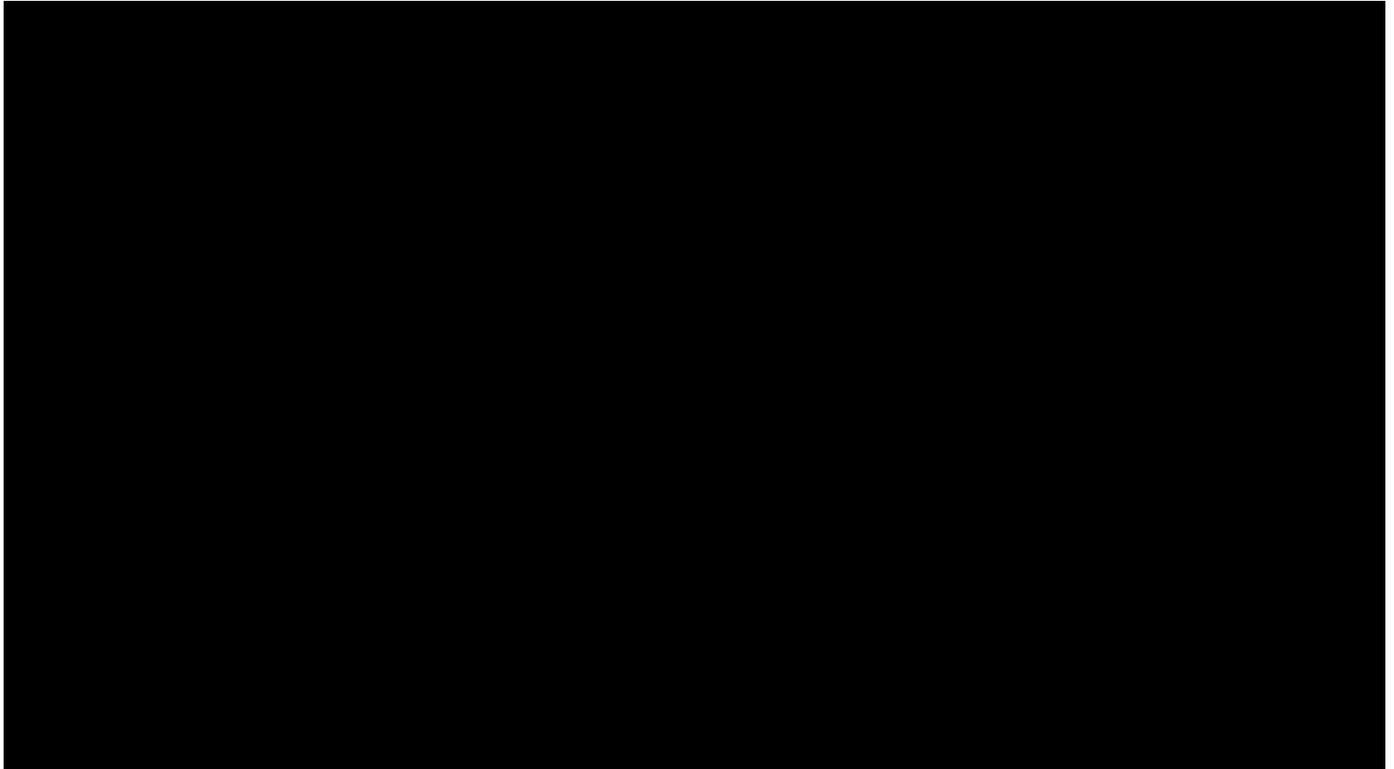
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