

# Former Colby college star plays overseas

By Kayla Cornett

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Nathan Bowie lives by two sayings: "Success is a word the lazy use to describe the dedicated," and "The only way to improve tomorrow is to know what you did wrong today."

He had never dreamed that these sayings would lead him to become a professional basketball player, but that is where he has ended up. At 25 years old, Bowie plays professionally in Portugal. He has an associates degree from Colby Community College and a bachelor's degree from University of Central Arkansas.

Bowie grew up in Kansas City, Kan. and started playing basketball at a very young age.

"I can't put my finger on the exact age, but I'm pretty sure it was around the age of 3 or 4," Bowie said. "My dad, Ernest Bowie bought me and my brother, Aaron Bowie, a Fisher Price basketball goal to put downstairs in the basement. This is where I developed the love for the game."

As he got older, Bowie said the sport became more of a privilege and a reward for hard work.

"Me and my brother would have to help him clean the schools, since he was a custodian, and in finishing this task, we would get the chance to play basketball afterwards," he said. "This kind of set the stage for working hard at a young age."

Bowie was actually interested in art up through high school, and even received several scholarships to attend art institutes. He also received several basketball scholarships. The latter led him to begin thinking about basketball as a profession.



Nathan Bowie played for Terceira Basket this past season in a game against Angra Basket (Azores Island rivals). Bowie's team swept Angra Basket in the playoffs, and went 9-2 overall to become Portuguese champions.

"My choice to play pro basketball started my senior year in high school when I received a lot of full-ride scholarships to attend colleges," Bowie said. "My uncle, Eric Bowie, was good friends with former Colby Community College Trojans Coach Brian Osterman, and he visited my home in Kansas City."

However, Osterman contacted Bowie the summer before he started college to tell him that he was moving to another community college in Missouri to coach. Osterman said Bowie was welcome to follow him, but Bowie decided to stay at Colby Community College and played for the team from 2004 to 2006.

While playing at Colby Com-

munity College, Bowie received several awards from the National Junior College Athletics Association during the 2005-2006 season. He was selected for the All-Tournament First Team, the First Team All-Conference, the All-Region Team, and as an All-American and Co-Player of the Year.

Bowie said that was the year he realized he could use basketball to further his education.

"I realized my sophomore year as I flipped through all the mail from D1 (Division I) schools that I could use basketball to obtain my degrees as well as maybe continuing my basketball career," he said. "After doing really well at University of Central Arkansas, I knew that becoming a pro would

be a reality instead of a dream now."

Along the way, though, Bowie went through some hardships that almost halted his future in basketball.

"My freshman year, my best friend was killed, beat up so bad that he had a brain aneurysm," Bowie said. "My teammates comforted me and told me to use this as a positive motive to keep pushing forward, regardless if a wall was in the way."

Another hardship came his sophomore year when he had run in with his coaches. He had a disagreement about working out in the pool because he couldn't swim. To compromise, he suggested to do windsprints or towel

drills, but the disagreement led to his being suspended from the team until he apologized.

"From there, I apologized and continued to block out the negative while I strived for my bigger goal in life...I think we all go through hardships in life," Bowie said. "You cannot experience success if there is not some kind of hardships knocking you two or three steps back. This is what makes us try harder and harder."

Bowie received his associate of arts degree in Physical Education from Colby Community College in 2006, and then moved on to University of Central Arkansas (UCA) where he got his bachelor of science in Family and Consumer Science with a minor in African Studies in 2008.

He was then signed to the NBA D-League Draft, but was not drafted. Bowie thought playing overseas was the right move for him and decided to leave to D-League.

"I decided to play overseas instead of continuing the D-League because overseas they give a lot of players chances if you can land a job," he said. "A lot of the D-League is based on politics; who you know, and who likes you. The game of basketball shouldn't be like that, it should be based on who can play. Don't get me wrong, the D-League is a very good league, and has a lot of exposure opportunities but it's not for everyone, including me. But you never know. God works in mysterious ways."

In 2009, Bowie signed with the Vancouver BC Titans. He then left Vancouver during the season to go to Morocco for workouts. Since then, he has played in Slovenia, Spain and most recently Portugal.

Even though Bowie knew play-

ing overseas was the right thing for him, his parents weren't so sure at first.

"My father wanted me to play in the NBA D-League more based on what he was familiar with," Bowie said. "A lot of us out there know very little about Europe, South America, Asia, and also Africa. My mother didn't care so much, but of course she wanted me close so I could contact her often. But now I think they understand that my decision was based on what was best for me in my future."

This past season proved especially good for Bowie's career. His team, Terceira Basket, became Portuguese Champions, and he received seven awards from Eurobasket.com, including All-Proliga Player of the Year, All-Proliga Guard of the Year, and All-Proliga Newcomer of the Year.

Despite all the success he's found in playing professional basketball, Bowie wants kids striving to be professional athletes to know how important it is to receive an education too.

"Each and every kid should have several goals in life, and if that's sports, then they should use sports to pay for college first, then try to obtain their goals of being a pro athlete," Bowie said. "This is the true goal in life. You will always need some kind of education to fall back on. Nothing is certain in life and different plans and goals will always help any kid to fulfill much out of life."

In Bowie's mind, it was a simple choice to pay attention in class, get his high school diploma, get his degrees, and to play in many different countries.

"Not to mention visiting the world for free," Bowie said. "Everyone can do this."

## Chiefs building up return game

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. (AP) — The Chiefs' return game got off to a promising start last year when rookie Dexter McCluster took a punt 94 yards for a momentum-swinging touchdown in the opener.

Kansas City couldn't keep it up all season with McCluster and fellow second-round pick Javier Arenas.

"They both got beat up in a number of different ways, which happens," coach Todd Haley said. "And it didn't look so hot as we got through the season."

The Chiefs signed receiver Steve Breaston this offseason, adding even more depth and versatility to their return game.

Kansas City ranked 28th in the

NFL on kickoff returns last season and 17th on punt returns. McCluster's score turned out to be its only touchdown from the return game all season. The Chiefs did improve their average punt return by 4 yards from the previous year.

In the 2010 Week 1 win over the Chargers, Arenas had a pair of long punt returns in the first half. Then McCluster came in to field a second-quarter punt and went all the way to the end zone.

Breaston returned punts and kicks in his first four seasons with Arizona. Haley believes the Chiefs won't use one dedicated return man this season because of each player's other abilities.

"If that were his No. 1 job, then I would be all for that if he were

a big-time returner, which they all have a chance to be," Haley said. "As the situation looks right now, I don't know if that'll be the case. Those are guys that are contributing in other areas where we need them — all three of them."

Arenas practiced with the first team at cornerback until Brandon Carr signed Thursday. A nickel back in his first season, Arenas should continue to see plenty of snaps on defense.

McCluster, a hybrid running back-wide receiver, provides versatility and speed on offense. Breaston projects as the slot receiver behind Dwayne Bowe and rookie first-round pick Jonathan Baldwin.



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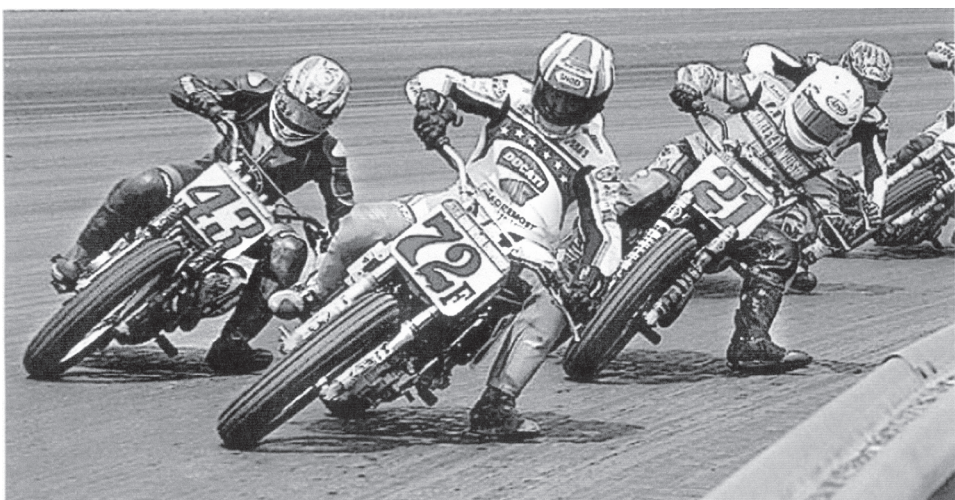
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