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Kentucky coach Mark Stoops finished his offseason roster rebuild by adding four transfers who look targeted for practice depth roles.

Why UK rounded out roster with 4 unheralded transfers

BY JON HALE
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Kentucky football’s 2025 roster looks set. After adding four more transfer commitments in the last week, the Wildcats are at the SEC’s limit of 85 scholarships. But unlike the December transfer portal window when Mark

Stoops and his staff added a gaggle of players expected to start or at least feature in key roles, the final additions to the roster were likely met with a furrowed eyebrow by even the most dedicated of football fans. Kentucky added who? Former Florida Atlantic tight end Elijah Brown is the most experienced of

the group having played in eight games last season, but he caught just one pass and was listed third at his position on the Owls’ final 2024 depth chart. Wide Receiver Ashton Cozart played in just four games for SMU last season, catching one pass. Offensive lineman Cameron Jones played in just one game in two seasons at James Madi-

son, but that’s one more appearance than lineman Rob Fogler, who did not play at all in two years at Ball State. Those are far from the résumés of transfers one could reasonably expect to contribute in college football’s most difficult conference next season. So, why did Kentucky add them to round out the

2025 roster?

The final transfer commitments are a reflection of the state of the spring portal window. Kentucky lost seven more players to the portal after spring practice. No one from that group was expected to play a featured role in 2025, but the departures dealt another blow to the depth of a roster that saw 21 defections in December.

Kentucky needed players to run a full practice, especially with the number of walk-ons on the roster expected to be slashed in the wake of the NCAA’s House settlement. The final spring transfer additions at least fill that role.

The Wildcats are not alone in these types of additions in recent weeks.

Alabama added a sophomore tight end who caught just one pass for West Virginia last season. Arkansas added a wide receiver who caught just six passes in two years at Florida. Georgia added an offensive lineman who did not play while redshirting as a freshman at UCF last season.

Jones (6-foot-6, 330 pounds) and Fogler (6-foot-7, 304 pounds) at least have the frames to imagine them developing into rotation players eventually and to help provide tackle depth in practice. Brown can back up Illinois transfer Henry Boyer as a blocking tight end that allows Josh Kattus and Willie Rodriguez to be used more as receivers. As a former four-star recruit and track star in high school, Cozart should at least have the opportunity

to earn snaps in a wide receiver room with few proven commodities. Six of the seven transfers who committed to Kentucky in the spring window — wide receiver Hardley Gilmore, edge rusher Lorenzo Cowan and running back Seth McGowan are the others — have multiple seasons of eligibility remaining. Their ages could help stabilize the roster in the future, but it would be foolish to assume any backup is sticking around for multiple years based on recent trends. Brown and Cozart have already played for multiple schools even before enrolling at Kentucky. Gilmore transferred from UK to Nebraska in December and back to Kentucky in April. UK already lost one of its December transfer additions, offensive lineman Wallace Unamba, after it became clear he was not in line for a starting job for the Wildcats.

If even one of the four transfers added this week develops into a contributor for Kentucky, that should be considered a win. It would be far from a surprise if multiple players from this group were back in the portal after the season, and the Wildcats were looking for another source of practice depth next spring. The outcome of Kentucky’s 2025 season will depend on the performances of the transfers recruited to be starters in December and key returning players rather than this group.

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