

Bishop Kearney grad Gause tackles adversity

By Jeff DiVeronica
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Quentin Gause hasn't had much familiarity with failure in his athletic career. There was that time in high school when he got cut from a junior-varsity team, but that was basketball. That wasn't his sport. His forte is football and failure in that has been rare.

But that's exactly what the former Bishop Kearney star and Rutgers University linebacker has encountered in September and October when he was released twice, first by the Philadelphia Eagles and then by the New England Patriots. Gause admits he didn't expect it, especially in Philly because he thought he did well in three of the four preseason games in which he played.

"When I got cut I just kept believing," said the 24-year-old who has been on the Denver Broncos' practice squad since Oct. 17. "I kept working hard and I kept praying — doing what I've always done."

That's what Gause, who once struggled with learning but overcame that too, talked about at Kearney last month during a trip home on the Broncos' bye week. He stood in front of the student body and told those kids who attend the private school in Irondequoit that it's not always going to be easy, that you're going to get knocked down.

"But when somebody says, 'No, I can't hire you here,' or in football you get cut, you have to keep grinding," Gause said, using one of his favorite words to describe his stick-to-it style. "You have to keep preparing yourself for the next opportunity because if you don't that next one might slip by."

Gause is determined to make it in the NFL. He hasn't suited up for a game yet. Being on the practice squad means just that: You practice, you don't play in games. But it also means the team sees something in a young player and wants to keep him around. The 6-foot, 243-pound Gause was also only on the practice squads for the Eagles and Patriots, so he has yet to make his NFL debut in a regular-season game.

"I'm loving it," he said about being in Denver, where his Rocky Mountain high includes learning from one of the NFL's best linebackers, Von Miller, and the rest of the reigning Super Bowl champions.

Gause had never been to Colorado before, so being able to "wake up every day and see the mountains," is a treat. "It's gorgeous," he said. "It's pretty awesome." Firmly in the playoff hunt, the Broncos (7-4) play at Jacksonville (2-9) at 4 p.m. Sunday.

He played in 51 games at Rutgers, which he chose over Syracuse. He was a starter his final two seasons, and in that time his trophy case got cluttered. A standout student, Gause was twice named All-Big Ten honorable mention and to the league's All-Academic Team. He also earned the Big Ten's 2015 sportsmanship award, Rutgers' leadership award and its "R" Man courage award.

An exceptional athlete, he is known for his strong work ethic and nose for the football. He also ran varsity track at Kearney. As a youngster, he was a pretty good baseball player, too. He was the catcher on a youth team with former Irondequoit star and New York Yankees first-round draft pick, Cito Culver, 24.

Gause went undrafted last spring but signed with the Eagles as a free agent in May. He intercepted a pass in his first game and had six tackles as a linebacker in their preseason finale. Philly moved him to its practice squad right after the preseason finale but then released him a couple days later. "I was surprised, but things happen," Gause said. "That really showed me the business aspect of it."

One day later though, the roller-coaster ride picked up steam again when the Patriots signed Gause and he expressed on social media how happy he was to be with an organization that has become synonymous with winning. "I really liked how players prepared there," he said. But almost a month later, New England cut Gause.

"I didn't let it bother me like the Eagles cut did," said Gause, who joined the Broncos 11 days later.

He had learned from his first setback, and that's really what his life as a student revolved around at age young age. Quentin stuttered a lot as a boy. He went through the usual battery of tests and it was determined his "processing was slower than other kids," said his father, Richard Gause.

"He'd get it, it just took him a little longer," Richard said.

By the third grade, Richard and his wife, Vielka, found themselves sitting in a room with other school support staff and psychologists who told them their son would likely be a BOCES student in high school and that he'd "probably never learn at the same rate as other kids."

As Quentin's parents began to hear others lowering the bar for him, they raised it up. "The coach side of me," Richard said, told him that all his son needed to do was work harder than the other kids his age. So at home, his parents helped him more on spelling and reading. "He just needed more repetition," but he learned, Richard said.

"You can do this," the father would tell his son. "You are going to be great one day."

The Gause family also started an after-school educational program about a decade ago, too. It's now called Next Level and Beyond, and it focuses not only on academics but how youngsters can be more physically fit, too. When he comes home, Quentin still has a large presence, at World Gym at 1717 East Ave., where NLB is housed.

"Even over the last few months, I've seen so much growth in my son," said Richard, who is 55.

Quentin's final GPA at Rutgers, where he earned a degree in communications and media studies, was 3.28. He takes being a role model seriously and has gone back to Kearney routinely over the past few years to talk with students.

"He's not afraid to talk about his life and all the trials he had to endure as a kid. He really persevered through some learning disabilities and things of that nature," said Eddie Long, 44, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services at Kearney and Gause's former football coach. "He likes to come back and tell kids that if you set goals you can accomplish anything with hard work."

Quentin Gause is living proof of that. He has gone to the next level and beyond on and off the field.

"I'm just going to keep doing my job," said Quentin, who was among the Broncos players who handed out 2,500-plus turkeys to families at Sports Authority Field at Mile High Stadium in Denver on Nov. 22. "I'm going to play hard every day in practice. You can't relax. I know that. I just can't wait to make the 53-man roster."