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Oh, brother, where art thou?

By [Loren Jorgensen](#)

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Aaron Boone never got the chance to play football with his "little" brother Jesse while at Millard High in Fillmore. Jesse and his other brother, Jason, were known as "the boys" to Aaron because they were four and six years younger, respectively.

But the past couple of weeks, Aaron and Jesse Boone have been teammates for the Utah Blaze. Aaron is a veteran professional wide receiver and Jesse is a 6-foot-4, 300-pound rookie lineman.

"Eventually you want everybody on the team to feel like your brother, and that's when you have a true team," said Aaron. "But right now I really have my blood brother right there — and that's pretty cool."

Aaron, who, after serving an LDS Church mission and playing at Snow College, became a star receiver for Kentucky in the Southeastern Conference. He's been playing professional football since 2003, with his biggest claim to fame being a top pass catcher for the Berlin Thunder in NFL Europe for two seasons, helping the Thunder to a consecutive World Bowls.

Last year was Aaron's first in the AFL, and it started out in a frustrating manner as he sat on the bench for the Philadelphia Soul. He was then traded to the Kansas City Brigade and did some more bench warming — until there were just seven games left in the season.

Then he quickly became one of the top receivers in the league. In those seven games he had 66 catches for 748 yards and 19 touchdowns. In the season finale against the Blaze, Aaron caught 13 passes for 147 yards and five touchdowns.

"Unfortunately, we know exactly what Aaron is capable of doing," said Blaze coach and general manager Danny White after Utah signed him as a free agent during the offseason. "We know he likes playing at (EnergySolutions Arena) and we are excited to add another weapon to our arsenal."

"I had success last year, but I feel there is a lot of room for improvement in my game," said Aaron, who was named to the AFL's All-Rookie team in 2006. "I need to get better and better."

Shortly after Aaron joined the team from his home state, his brother Jesse — a former All-MWC center from the University of Utah — was signed by the Blaze. During training camp, he quickly found out that the indoor game is different from what he was used to.



Wide receiver Aaron Boone stretches during the Blaze's first practice session of 2007 as Utah's Arena Football team hits the field at EnergySolutions Arena in Salt Lake City.

Mike Terry, Deseret Morning News

"Everybody was telling me it was a different game — even my brother," said Jesse. "But I was thinking 'football is football.' But they were right. It is very different, and I've had to learn different spacing and figure out the way guys play the game ... I've improved every day and that's all I'm trying to do out here."

Getting playing time — and even making the final roster— may be difficult for Jesse, since he is still learning the indoor game and is behind Blaze mainstay Hans Olsen at center. Still, he has high hopes of being on the field with his older brother.

"It's been fun playing with Aaron so far," said Jesse earlier this week. "I played with my other brother (Jason) with the Utes, and now I get to be on the same team with Aaron. I'm expecting to be able to spike a lot of touchdowns this year, because I'm sure if I can hustle down to the end zone, he's going to give me a couple of balls to spike."

Olsen has taken the younger Boone under his wing and has been trying to teach him the tricks of the trade.

"Jesse is starting to pick it up," said Olsen. "He's starting to understand the system. Right now we just need to work on him being versatile. He's starting to really get that center position down. He has a great work ethic and desire to win — and that brings a lot to this team."

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