

Q&A | Former KSU lineman Michael Orr remembers the early Bill Snyder days

Jeff Chapman Contributing writer - Jun 19, 2026 Updated Jul 27, 2026



Mike Orr — “Michael” to his wife and my good friend Joy Beth (Scammahorn) — was an offensive lineman for K-State football from 1988 to 1992.

Orr is currently the building principal at Longview Farm Elementary School in the Lee’s Summit R7 School District. He retired from the Shawnee Mission School District two years ago after 25 years there as a counselor and then administrator.

He’s has worked in education for the last 33 years, starting as a teacher in the Blue Valley School District. He taught fourth and fifth grade as well as middle school history.

In 1999, Orr moved to the Shawnee Mission School District where he served as a Guidance Counselor at Shawnee Mission North for seven years. In 2006, he was named Associate

Principal at Shawnee Mission Horizons High School, and he stepped into the Building Principal role at Christa McAuliffe Elementary in 2012.

Orr earned his bachelor of science in elementary education from Kansas State, his master of science in counseling education from Emporia State and his master of arts certificate in school leadership from Baker University.

I sat down on Orr's back patio on a sunny day and had this conversation:

Chapman: When and why did you play sports, how did you choose football?

Orr: It started about kindergarten and all through grade school, playing them all. I started baseball first, because in a small town like Paola, all ages can kinda play together and that's the only way to field enough for teams. I was 5-6 years old. I was also a lot bigger for my age and was able to play ok with the older kids, many who were actually smaller than me. My dad noticed this and promoted sports as an option. I was a pitcher and played shortstop early in my little league baseball career and had a good amount of success at it. In Paola at that time, there weren't any community basketball programs, so I wasn't really introduced to basketball until 5th grade, And because of my height, I was a wanted commodity. I wasn't very skilled at it, but I was able to score and rebound easily since I towered over everyone.

Chapman: But no football?

Orr: Honestly, I didn't really try until like 5th-6th grade and I didn't like it. I didn't enjoy hitting people or having to wear the pads and helmet. I played football because that was the expectation for one of the biggest kids in the town, and it was what all my friends were doing, so I did it, too, even though I didn't enjoy it at all. It wasn't until my sophomore year in high school that I learned I loved football. I earned a varsity starting spot at offensive tackle and at defensive end that year. It was on the defensive side of the ball that I came to love football. As one of the biggest and most athletic guys on the field, when I realized I could run through offensive players that were much smaller than me and punish the guy with the ball, the entire opportunity changed almost overnight for me! This was fun!

As a junior, I moved to tight end and defensive end and at 6-foot-7 and 225 pounds, I began to get recruited just because of my size.

Chapman: According to the newspapers at the time, you were a top-10 recruit in Kansas, but as a tight end. When I got to know you, you played offensive tackle for K-State, so my question is, How does a lineman, a non-skills position player enjoy the game?

Orr: Great question and I will get to that answer eventually, but I started out playing defensive end and finally loved to hit people, disrupt plays since I was 6-foot-7 and 225 pounds already. I could really dominate. I also loved to catch passes, and I was difficult to tackle, so it was fun for me, and I was in a skills position, which helped me develop a real love for the game.

Chapman: When did you realize you had the potential or wanted to play at the college level?

Orr: I was going to be the first person from my family to go to college if I did, and other than the experiences starting to happen in my junior and senior year in high school, I wasn't really exposed much to the idea of playing college football. During my junior year though while playing tight end, I was having a great season. I was bigger than most linemen and had lots of success at that level. The coaches started to send my stats and film to colleges and since there was no social media, very few videos of me playing, I looked great on paper!

Chapman: Did you get invited to any summer camps or go to any?

Orr: I didn't, or at least if so, I don't remember it. I started getting recruiting letters from coaches around the country... Arkansas, USC, Nebraska, KU, Mizzou, and K-State. These inquiries made me even more excited and passionate about the game and motivated me to change my focus and really start preparing for a college football career. Keep in mind that my high school football coach was a history teacher and farmer... so football coaching as it is now, was not in the situation. I realized this and so I took the initiative to make sure my growth in the game was all self-driven and self-guided.

Chapman: Did Paola have a weight room you could use or train in?

Orr: Haha, not really. I had a friend whose father let me use his weight room that he had put together and I ran on the track and in the football stadium stands in the summer. There was nobody else. I worked out on my own. Very self-determined to make it... To show the people in Paola who doubted me that I would be successful at the college level.

Chapman: Your senior year was pretty spectacular. I recall following the state championship game against Abilene, since I was from Salina. Paola Panthers, right?

Orr: Yes! Good memory. We were really good. We went undefeated for the year and had a great running back, Darren Dawson, who went on to win the national championship with Pittsburg State, and set a career rushing record at Paola. Tiny Van Rheen was our quarterback, went on to play college baseball and then minor league baseball after Paola. We were loaded with talent, and nobody could stop us, except Abilene.

Chapman: Did you stop playing other sports to protect your future after that or did you keep competing?

Orr: I was invited to play in the Kansas Shrine Bowl, and I also loved playing basketball. I averaged just under 20 points a game as a senior and was being recruited by smaller D2 and NAIA schools for that, but I had made up my mind. My future was in Division 1 college football. As you mentioned earlier, I was named on the top ten list for Kansas high school recruits and that helped get more attention from the colleges I mentioned before.

Chapman: Did you make a lot of visits? Los Angeles?



Orr: Ha! You know my wife teases me about that now... I should have taken more advantage of those opportunities and visits and escaped from Paola to see what it was like, but I only went to Missouri, KU, and K-State.

Chapman: Why did you choose K-State over KU and Mizzou? They had to have had better facilities?

Orr: In 1988, K-State was really bad. I knew that, but I also knew I could have a chance to play right away. It was also close to home, and I wanted my parents, family, and friends to be able to come to games and support me. I felt like I owed it to them too. I also spent every Saturday watching Oklahoma and Nebraska play on television and knew they were always two of the best teams in the country, so it was exciting to think I could play against them every year.

Chapman: I met you and Joy Beth early in our freshman year at K-State in the fall of 1988, did you know her from high school? She and I got involved with ICAT (I contributed a twenty) and served on the board together all through school, but I knew you two were together.

Orr: Funny, I actually met Joy Beth during sorority rush week and summer practices in the lobby of Haymaker Hall in August of 1988. I was definitely interested in her from the time I saw her...and she wasn't really into me at all, but I was persistent and we did start dating pretty early on.

Chapman: You get recruited by Stan Parrish and Rich Rachel (defensive backs coach) and then they resign. How was that for you and the team?

Orr: It was brutal. They hadn't won for a couple of years, and it was really strange because he was forced to resign or be fired, but even after Coach Parrish announced his resignation, it was effective at the end of that season, so he remained as the lame duck coach for the rest of the season. All the assistants too.... The rest of that year was an absolute shit-show! He obviously had lost the team, and it showed on and off the field...

Chapman: You played 5 seasons though, graduating officially after the 1992 season?

Orr: Yes, I was redshirted for the fall of '88 and was competing for the tight end position. I took full advantage of that semester and worked hard in the weight room, adding about 25 lbs. of muscle between my arrival in August and when I went home for Christmas in December.

Chapman: I was there on campus, I have heard stories from your teammates, but just how poor was the program financially?

Orr: To be honest if I look back from today and compare the program to what it is today, it was in a really bad spot, but you know what, Chappie, I came from a small town, Paola, and grew up in a lower middle class modest family. I didn't even know that K-State was poor, that we didn't have things. Yes, we had faded clothes, limited amounts of practice gear, used socks, but we got that stuff for free, we had a training table and a weight room, and I just thought this was how it was in college. I had no other perspective or exposure at the time to even know it was bad... which honestly probably helped me make it through those early times at KSU.

Chapman: I heard that there was a very limited selection of shoes, clothes, and workout gear and that the training table was pretty slim.

Orr: looking back, yes, but at the time, I was happy to be playing D1 'ball and I was happy about it.

Chapman: If the coach resigns and is leaving, how does that affect the team as a whole, was it chaos?

Orr: Because no one was effectively accountable anymore, none of the players went to study hall, many would miss practices, it was just a bad situation with no oversight of a football team. But I stayed the course, followed the rules, and did what I was told, along with all the other Foundation members who stuck it out, did what they were told and hoped we would have a new coach who could help us be successful. I was taught to follow authority, listen to your teachers,

parents, and your coaches. Do what you are told, what you are expected to do. So I went to class, study hall, and practice, wearing the same old ragged purple t-shirt under my pads all through school. I towed the line. It's just who I was and who I still am today.

Chapman: Bill Snyder arrives on campus, he's the new coach. How did that go over?

Orr: Coach Snyder met the team in the locker room before his press conference and told us that the losing is going to stop, that we are going to have success here and it's going to "be harder than anything you have ever done before... but you need to believe that it will happen." We all kinda nodded our heads and thought ok, I guess we will see. Then at one of his initial press conferences, he throws out the most famous line in K-State football history... "We have the opportunity to start the greatest turnaround in college football history, and it starts today." Eyebrows raised, a few chuckled, but the members of the team that were still there, immediately believed... and that moment was the start of that turnaround!

Chapman: And then, the infamous winter conditioning?

Orr: It was a shock to everyone's system. He told us it was going to be the hardest thing we'd ever done in our lives... then he showed us he wasn't joking about it when we started that winter conditioning season in January of 1989! Coach Snyder introduced us to the "new normal" and it was absolutely brutal! Statements like "Everyone will start giving effort, we will run people off that don't." and "If you're not willing to give 100% to make this team better, then you can leave." He and the coaches didn't say those words exactly, but that's the way it played out, and everyone got the message... Some got the message and left during that first week of conditioning and many believed, put in the work, and stuck around.

Chapman: Was that in the old Brandeberry Workout facility?

Orr: Yes, that was terrible place! (He laughs) but it was indoors at least. I am not sure if it had heat or AC, but it was a bare bones place that all the sports shared. Winter conditioning consisted of 8 workout/drill stations set up with water and large trash cans at each one. The assistant coaches told us, do the drills, if you need to vomit, step out, vomit and get back in the drill. Guys were falling out all over the place, with the coaches up their asses to get back in the drill and not quit. I would say we had at least 20-30 guys simply just walk out and never come back during the first few days of the winter session.

Chapman: Wasn't the quitting what he wanted? To thin the herd?

Orr: Exactly, and as I mentioned before I didn't know or understand that quitting was an option. I wasn't going to let my family down or my new girlfriend, so I stuck it out, just as many other members of the Foundation decided to do.

When we hit spring practice, we had already conquered an unbelievable mental achievement by making it through those winter sessions... Now came spring practice. With the previous year's seniors gone, no freshman recruits there yet and probably 40 less guys than we started winter

with, we didn't even have enough players for a full 11 on 11 scrimmage on many occasions, so we had to do things like half line scrimmage where the left side offense vs the right-side defense and vice versa. It was pretty crazy. The intensity of the winter drills simply carried over to spring practice. The coaches now had guys who they knew were mentally tough but now came the part where they found out who was physically tough too. So, it was a boot camp style spring with lots of yelling, screaming, conditioning, and working beyond what your body and mind thought you could do... which was exactly what Coach Snyder wanted it to be.

Chapman: How did you know you were doing good? Were the coaches complimentary for you sticking it out?

Orr: Ha-ha! No. I guess we just knew because we were still on the team, but the expectations were always increasing, "get better every day," "this will be the hardest thing you have ever done."

Chapman: When did you all start to really buy in? Believe in the system?

Orr: It was a slow burn. Having talked to the coaches since then... even they were not sure it was going to work, and rightfully so! They were absolutely worn out. Meeting constantly, all through the night, watching film, evaluating every step, every second. The guys from Iowa understood Coach Snyder better of course and they took the lead and soon we all just understood it and saw the results developing before our eyes. There was no one defining moment, but the connection every one of us felt after making it through the winter TOGETHER and through the spring practices TOGETHER and following the same solid routines every day made us stronger than ever and believers in the system. Off the field, coaches made efforts too, such as being friendly on campus, getting to know our families, even my offensive line coach, John Latina made friends with my girlfriend Joy Beth... in fact, he was much nicer to her than he was to me when we would see him! :) All of those little things made a difference... which was the core foundational structure of Bill Snyder- do the little things to make you better.

Chapman: Weren't they kinda old school rough too?

Orr: Oh yes. Different times back then... Lots of yelling, name calling and occasionally grabbing the facemasks to make a point. You can't do those types of things today, but it was just normal football life in that time, and it never bothered me, it actually made me want to work harder and not disappoint the coaches. They were always on our asses about something, and the main reason was to build the work ethic and mental toughness needed to be winners, which we didn't have prior to that.

Chapman: When did you make the switch from TE to Offensive Tackle?

Orr: I redshirted in the fall of 1988 as a Tight End. When we started spring practices in April of 1989, there were about 5 tight ends. Going into spring practice I was around 3rd or 4th on the depth chart with Al Jones, Russ Campbell, and others. At 6-foot-7 and about 250 pounds, I was a

large tight end. As the spring practices unfolded, we had guys quit, guys get hurt and it left the offensive line with not enough players for a two deep depth chart. So, about a week or so into spring practices, Coach Snyder comes to me after practice and says, “Michael, I’d like to visit with you in my office.” So, I showered and went to see him.

We sat down and he asked me if I had ever considered being an offensive lineman, an offensive tackle? He shared a story with me of a player at Iowa he had coached that had similar size and ability... John Alt from the Chiefs, who I admired as a Chiefs fan. He tells me that I had a similar build, good footwork, agile for a bigger guy.... He tells me that at Iowa John also started his career as a tight end and moved to offensive tackle and became an All-Big-10 player and now a professional.

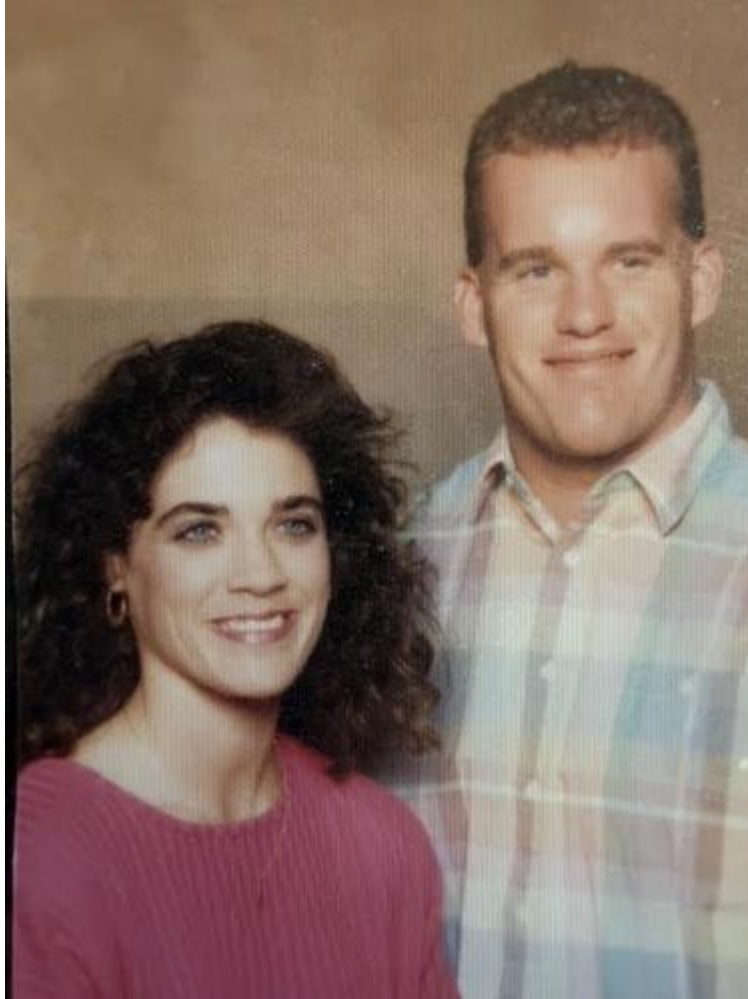
Chapman: He was suggesting to you in his way to make you want to make the decision?

Orr: Yes, at that point, I felt like he was “giving me the option” of moving from TE to OT... and here is how it went from there. I told him I thought I could be a tight end and wanted to compete for the job. That I felt I had good hands, could block well, and move well for my size. He told me he appreciated my thoughts and to continue to think about the move over the next few practices. Each day, when you showed up to the facility, there was a daily depth chart posted in the locker room. Your position fluctuated day to day, depending on your performance in the practice the day before and the coach’s film study of you. The next practice was normal and I was still 3rd/4th string. The following day I had been moved down to 5th string and we had a scrimmage. I didn’t get any reps at tight end in the scrimmage and sat on my helmet the entire scrimmage. The day after that, I was now the 6th string tight end and was even behind a guy or two that I didn’t even know was on the team... and I could see what was happening. After that third day I asked Coach Snyder if I could meet with him to talk after practice. During the meeting, I said “Coach, I have been thinking about it, and I think I’m ready to move to Offensive Tackle now...” In classic Coach Snyder fashion, he looked at me and smiled and said, “Michael I am glad you made that decision.”

Chapman: That’s what I remember, you at tackle, No. 77.

Orr: Honestly, Jeff, it was the best thing for me. We were so thin at O-line, I was immediately able to earn a spot in the two deep and get more reps than I had ever thought about as a freshman. During the 1989 season, I got my first game action at the University of Nebraska, of all places, late in the first quarter and played against two NFL defensive lineman that game. I also was able to start in 7 games as a freshman and ended up starting a total of 35 games at offensive tackle during my 4-year career. That “decision” Coach Snyder helped me make was what was best for me AND what was best for the team, and I couldn’t be prouder of my career and how it ended up.

Chapman: In that first season under Snyder, you were about to step on the field against a ranked Arizona State on the road, what was the team like, the atmosphere, the attitude?



Orr: At that point, after the first winter, spring and summer workout seasons, those that remained on the team, those of us that suited up to make the trip... we were all confident, we felt like we could beat anyone and when we stepped onto that field, we truly thought we were going to beat Arizona State! That is a testament to the culture and mindset Coach Snyder and the staff built in us in a relatively short time. It also speaks to the guys who stayed and put in the work to get to that point.

Chapman: If I recall, didn't William Price or someone make an early interception?

Orr: Yes! In the first possession. So, we march out there with such high confidence, we get an immediate take away, and at that moment not only did we think we could win, we thought we were going undefeated for the season!

Chapman: We won't go through all the games, and we know that the team went 1-10, but there were signs of major improvement all season. There was that first win though.

Orr: The next couple of games we should have won, but you know when we were working on things day to day, week to week in practice, we came back down to earth and realized we had

things to work on. We were definitely on the lighter side of the talent continuum that first year, but there was no team that worked harder than we did and that kept us in a few of those early games, even though we ended up losing them. The coaching staff would set goals for each game around the stats that really helped you see team improvements; Things like; total first downs gained, rushing yards per carry, plays of 10+ yards, plays of 20+ yards, yards per carry, yards per catch, and we were told, get a little better every day, make positive progress...

Chapman: While these improvements were obviously happening to the team, the media was relentless with coach saying, welp, ok but you're still losing.

Orr: Truthfully it wasn't about wins and losses for us, but about the character of doing better, and if you remember or go back and look at those first few press conferences Coach Snyder would get visibly angry with the media and lash out at them, defending the team and how much better we were getting and how hard we were working, which we saw and appreciated.

Chapman: I do remember and he would point out, why don't you ask about the guy who had 8 tackles this week and only 4 last week, maybe pay attention to what is happening here instead of being lazy. It was actually funny from the outside watching the press squirm a bit, but those actions had to make you believe in him even more?

Orr: While he had unbelievably high demands and never ever allied us to cut a corner or take a play off or have time to gloat, he and the coaching staff had such high respect from that team... because we knew by that point what was happening, why it was happening and that we needed to continue to believe and it would continue to change. We knew no matter how hard he was on us, he and the coaches always had our back, that he understood us, believed in us and the result was to go prove him right next time. Just keep getting better... and eventually as you know, we finally got that win against North Texas State.

Chapman: Obviously, the entire K-State world was ecstatic, but what was it like for the guys, for the coaches?

Orr: It was only one win, it was an ugly win, but as they say "winning cures a lot of things" It also shows that with hard work comes that success and it really increased our attention to detail, wanting to win and do better for each other as a unit, for the program, for the guys who quit, and to let the press know we could actually do it.

Chapman: The next year, a whopping 5 wins and a taste of near .500 ball. I know as a fan you could just feel the energy, that the tides were changing.

Orr: It was, but Snyder got a lot of flak about the quality of opponents like New Mexico, but he fully knew and understood that a winning culture had to be built with wins. So, he did what he needed to do to reinforce the hard work and efforts we had been putting in day to day by altering the schedule to fuel that culture and allow us to not only believe we could win, but taste and see it when we beat up on teams we were better than... It was a brilliant plan of action at that time...

We got our first conference wins over Oklahoma State and Iowa State and many of the loss margins were narrowing. We also started to get some great new recruits, and we could feel it too. The energy level was increasing as was the desire to not only improve every day, but to win.

Chapman: 1991 was a favorite season of mine for this group, particularly at Nebraska. Paul Watson and Michael Smith both had an amazing day and even the Nebraska fans seemed to show some respect to the team after the game.

Orr: That was a fun year, we started out 3-0 I think and we won 7 games, making us above .500 for the first time in a very long time. We were a game short of bowl eligibility, so it was good, but not quite where we wanted to be. That game at Nebraska though... I swear the conference just didn't want us to win. We had the lead by a touchdown and were attempting a FG to go up by 10 midway into the 3rd quarter. It looked as though the FG was good from my spot at left tackle, but it was called no good, so they got the ball back and end up scoring a touchdown, and then another one and we leave there with a 38-31 loss.

Chapman: That was heartbreaking, but it was also the moment you had to know. You can now play with anybody and beat them.

Orr: YES! That's exactly what happened during that specific game. That game in particular provided yet another jump to the next level of understanding we can and will compete with the top teams in the conference. You mentioned earlier about the influx of new players and their impact. That 1991 team had 5 guys go the NFL. We had more talent than we had had in a long, long time, and there were more waiting in the wings for their turn on the field.

Chapman: 1992 was a year that really seemed like a step back. It seemed to me like there was a lack of leadership at the quarterback position.

Orr: Well, I hate to say it, but it's true. The coaching staff put their eggs in the Jason Smargiasso basket, and it just didn't work out the way it was supposed to. He really struggled to stay in the pocket and throw the ball downfield with any success. There were frustrated linemen and he was getting beat up, so there was tension in the locker room as well at times.

Chapman: Wasn't Chad May also on redshirt then?

Orr: Yes, and that kind of made matters worse. Chad came in as a highly rated quarterback; He was able to practice with us but had to sit out the 1992 game season. Well, he and Smargiasso were both competitors and both knew they would be competing for the job in 1993. During the 1992 season we were in the locker room after a mid-week practice and May said to Smargiasso something like, "you better enjoy this year while you're out there, because once I take the field, you will never play again."

Chapman: Wow!

Orr: Yes. Fists were flying, words were spoken and guys took sides. In the end, that extreme confidence from Chad May is what made him a very successful QB for K-State during his career, and he could back up what he said.

Chapman: I always thought that with a different QB that year, you would have definitely won a few more games.

Orr: Without a doubt. On the road at Missouri and Oklahoma for instance. And we didn't make a bowl game, but after I left, they went to 11 straight!

Chapman: Was it bittersweet that you didn't get to go to a bowl game?

Orr: Well yes and no, We didn't play well enough to get there, but most of us definitely felt like we helped that '93 team make it there.

Chapman: That game was special and every key player had a great night! Did you and Joy Beth go?

Orr: Yes, it was a great game, but no, we stayed home. We were just married and just starting out, not a lot of extra income, so we watched it on TV.

Chapman: You graduate, get married and get right to work in education, tell me briefly about your career. Congrats on your retirement.

Orr: Thank you, yes. Though it's not really a retirement. I retired from Kansas education system and am now working in Missouri. A quick run through my career. I am currently the Principal at Longview Farm Elementary in the Lee's Summit School District.

Chapman: You moved up quickly into administration, was that always your goal.

Orr: Not really. As a high school counselor, I worked to try and find outside the box solutions for kids that needed help. Many times, I was unfortunately told by administration "sorry we can't do that." I didn't like that answer as I was working to do what was best for the student... So, I figured the only way to affect change the way I wanted it was to be in charge of the place, which is why I went into school administration. So, I can make decisions that are best for kids, even if it's outside the box and not traditionally what it looks like in a public-school environment. I do also really enjoy leading and mentoring other teachers and helping them grow as professionals in this field.

Chapman: You have three sons; did they play football too?

Orr: As I tell this story I want to clarify that Joy Beth and I learned a lot from kid 1 until kid 4 so with each of my sons we raised them differently. My oldest Zachary just wasn't really interested in sports that much as a youth, so we opted to allow him to sit out and not play sports early on. Well, that proved to be a mistake. Later when he was older, his skills hadn't developed like the other kids and so he was behind, which in a competitive school environment didn't allow

him to make the team and have coach take time to develop the skills he possessed. Our lamentation now is that Zachary was a really quality athlete, just like the younger two boys. We just didn't know to push him more and force him to do something he wasn't sure about, which was our fault. Looking back, we should have pushed him a bit more here and there, which would have allowed him to find athletic success.

My middle son Nicholas played all sports growing up and ended up being bigger, and much more aggressive and did well for himself. We pushed him a bit more. He ended up winning a state football championship and a state discus championship at Blue Valley North before going on to play football at Butler Community College and then at Colorado State–Pueblo. He is currently living in Des Moines and is playing for the Iowa Barnstormers of the Indoor Football League as an Offensive and Defensive Lineman.

My youngest Andrew played all sports growing up as well. After his sophomore year of high school, it was apparent he was going to play sports in college. He came to Joy Beth and me and asked if he could quit football and focus on basketball and track. We reluctantly said yes and it worked out. He had a great high school career, winning a state basketball title and state title in the high jump at Blue Valley North High School. He went on to a great four-year basketball career at Washburn University and just finished his first year playing professional basketball in Europe in the top Danish basketball league and has signed a contract for the fall of 2026 to play in the top league in Austria.

I will add that all three of our boys are Eagle Scouts, which Joy Beth and I are extremely proud of.

Our youngest daughter Emily was not interested in any way in athletics. She actually went out of her way to not be involved in those opportunities... but instead focused on her art and music. She is an amazing artist and plays piano by ear, which is an incredible talent. While the boys all found their way through athletics, we did a reset with Emily and have pushed her in the same way with her art and music lessons. Different kids need different things, but they all need to be involved in multiple activities in their areas of strength. Emily will be attending Johnson County Community College in the fall.

Chapman: Your thoughts about a few things: 1993 Copper Bowl?:

Orr: Even though I wasn't playing in the game, I took the same pride in what we did that night as those guys that were out there versus Wyoming. I think I can speak for all of those guys who fought through the transformation from 1989 to 1992 by sharing what an immense amount of pride, joy, and satisfaction we all took watching our brothers and our team take that leap to the next level with that pounding of Wyoming. It was just the next step in what was becoming the national story of the "greatest turnaround in college football history."

Chapman: 1998?

Orr: As sweet as the 1993 Copper Bowl was, I think the loss to A & M in the Big 12 title game was just as hard to stomach on the other end of the spectrum. Partially because of the hard-fought rungs of the ladder that had been climbed since 1989 to get there, and partly because of the missed opportunity that we all could see was in their grasp that may not ever be there again. As always, you take pride in what you've done and what you've built and that run of seasons through the mid to late 90's was one to remember...

Chapman: 2003?

Orr: If the Copper Bowl was the #1 crowning moment of the program for me, the 2003 Big 12 title win was definitely 1A... Joy Beth and I were there in the stadium that night and just as we sat beaming with pride in 1993 after the Copper Bowl, we stood in Arrowhead stadium, overcome with emotion as we watched Darren Sproles, the KSU defense and the entire program simply overwhelm the Oklahoma Sooners, who had even been called one of the greatest college teams ever that year. That win again took me back to the winter of 1989 as I thought about what we did, the pain and effort we put in and the dreams of results we had... to be there and witness what Bill Snyder told us about and promised us would happen if we put in the effort, worked hard and got better each day... was happening right in front of us! Just an unbelievable feeling of accomplishment, even a decade later.

Chapman: Ron Prince and Snyder part 2?

Orr: Not much to say other than everyone makes a mistake now and then, and our AD and whoever decided to hire him made a big one. From the beginning of his tenure when he took down old player photos and records and refused to invite former players back into the offices and locker room, he was destined to be a failure. I felt bad for the guys who played through those years, as it was really the first time since 1989 that the program took multiple steps backwards, which was a scary thing to see. The way the Prince era ended, it seemed only fitting that Coach Snyder return for a second tour and it didn't take long to fully understand that his "system" worked. As he quickly got the program back on its feet by instilling and infusing his trademark on the team and program for a second time.

Chapman: Your take on Chris Klieman?

Orr: At the end of the day, Chris Klieman did a great job at KSU. He did something that needed to be done... and that was to be a coach not named Bill Snyder who would win a Big 12 title. He kept the program at a high level, and I honestly think he is a wonderful human being and that may actually be what got him into the position he ended up in. Sometimes, "good guys finish last" as the old saying goes and I say that with lots of respect. He was a good man who tried to do things the right way and in this day and age of college football, you have to have an edge and find players who have that edge and I am not sure he was able to get to that spot as a coach or as a recruiter. That led to a really nice group of young men who played at KSU but maybe lacked that dawg mentality that they needed to truly keep themselves at the top of the Big 12 heap

recently. I say these things as a mouthpiece for other former players as well that I have talked to about this topic. So, it isn't just my opinion, it's the opinion of others who have been watching from the sidelines and some who have a pretty close tie to the program still.

Chapman: The new Klein era and Avery Johnson?

Orr: Collin learned from Coach Snyder and saw what the last year brought to the program. He understands what it takes to have success and that he has to have an edge as a coach and that he has to draw a line in the sand and let his players know how it's going to be. And if the player(s) don't want to follow that expectation, he has to be willing to move on from them and find the next guy, which he seems very willing and able to do. This mentality from the HC allows these kids to not hold a program hostage and forces them to either follow the direction that has been set or get out of the way.

Collin seems to fully understand this, and I cannot wait to see what it looks like and how it develops over the upcoming season and beyond. I am hopeful his leadership and impact on Avery Johnson will be a highly compatible match and Avery will be able to unlock what I still think is an entirely higher level of play than he's even shown up to this point.

Chapman: Because I know her and her enthusiasm for K-State, tell me about the impact your wife has had on all of this:

Orr: It's hard to really put into words the impact Joy Beth had on me over the last 38 years we have known each other. We met and started dating in August of 1988 when we were both freshman at KSU. When it comes to people who truly witnessed and understood from the inside, what happened at KSU when Bill Snyder took over, she has to be filled with more insight than anyone other than maybe the players who lived it each day.

She grew up with a dad who was a football player as well, so from an early age, she understood it. When we started dating, she was not ever shy about sharing her thoughts with me on my effort, the team's effort, the results, and the improvements necessary. She was also never shy about making sure I knew and the other guys knew how much she supported us, cared about us, and wanted us to be successful and this program to be successful.

I can say without a doubt that if it weren't for her, I would not be sitting here today as a successful professional, husband, father, friend, mentor and whatever else I can think of that I have done. We have been married for 33 years and dated for 5 prior to that. We had such a fantastic opportunity to spend our KSU years together and really grow together. She was a huge contributor in her sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta, serving as the president for a year and also mentoring many of the members and still mentors and leads others now as well. As hard as it was to mentally fight through those years as a division one college football player, she was a constant foundational support that really helped me make it through.

Chapman: Your final wisdom for young kids that want to play football:

Orr: I think football (along with other sports and extracurricular activities) offers kids and young adults the opportunity to grow stronger physically and mentally. It allows you to push your body and mind to a place where you want to give up because it's hard and offers you the chance to make decisions about how mentally and physically tough are you and how good do you really want to be at something.

Football in particular is a hard game... physically and mentally. It isn't for everyone. I would always recommend kids play it to see if they like it. Some may not, but some may find a spark they didn't even know they had when they make that first hard hit or catch that first pass or even just make it through that first really hard practice and see that mentally, they can in fact do it!

Sports is a microcosm of life. Those that can train their bodies and minds to be mentally tough and persevere through hard things will be those that are successful in what they do. Playing football for Bill Snyder at Kansas State University was the most difficult thing I have ever done, mentally and physically. My body and mind were pushed beyond what I thought I could do. That "training" of mind and body between 18 — 21 gave me the foundation to go out into the world and take on challenges and obstacles that were not nearly as tough as those I had already accomplished in college. For that, I am extremely grateful.