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# Lancaster Bee

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## Jim Kelly looks forward to 28th annual FOOTBALL CAMP

by MARY BEST Reporter



“Kelly Tough” humbles Jim Kelly.

The former Buffalo Bill said his increasingly successful recovery from a squamous cell carcinoma diagnosis in 2013 has made him more excited about his annual football camp than he has been in years.

“Last year, I could hardly walk and I still got out there to try and do as much as I can. But this year I want to go out there and be able to run around like a goofball and have fun. I plan on getting my arm ready,” Kelly said. “I’m feeling good.”

Where's the story?



2 Points Mentioned

Jim Kelly hopes to get back on the field at his 28th annual football camp this year. Photos by Chuck SkipperPurchase color photos at [www.BeeNews.com](http://www.BeeNews.com)

The 28th annual Jim Kelly Football Camp, slated for June 28 to July 2 at [Ralph Wilson Stadium in Orchard Park](#), will kick off nearly a year after Kelly received the news that he was cancer-free.

One of Kelly’s favorite parts of the camp is the “Chalk Talks,” when he talks to the participants and their parents about life. New Bills head coach Rex Ryan and former wide receiver Andre Reed are confirmed to speak at the camp as well.

“Most kids think they know it all. And I don’t know it all, trust me, but you learn by experience and you want to make sure kids understand what life is like now,” Kelly said. “Kids nowadays have to grow up a lot quicker than we grew up. [They] have cellphones at 10 years old and so many things they can do now, and they’ve got to watch what they say and what they do because it’s a different world today.”

While he likes getting to speak to the camp attendees, Kelly said the best part is, without a doubt, playing the game of football. Younger participants learn the fundamental basics of the game while older players focus on honing their skills.



Jim Kelly is shown with a poster full of well wishes he keeps in his office. In August 2014, Kelly was found to have no evidence of squamous cell carcinoma, which he had been diagnosed with in June 2013.



“I’m a big advocate for doing it right the first time. Bad habits are hard to break, no matter what they are,” Kelly said.

“When you tackle, you want to have your head up and see what you hit. The only finger that touches the football are your second finger and your ring finger. The toughest thing for kids to understand is that you need to practice good habits. You can teach kids whatever you want, but if they don’t apply it to their skill and remember what you tell them, they’ll go back to what they used to do.”

In addition to the annual football camp and golf tournament, Kelly and his family are planning a new fundraiser, the Kelly Tough 12K on May 30. The seven-mile race, which begins at the University at Buffalo South Campus and finishes at HarborCenter, can be competed by an individual or four-person relay team, with all proceeds to benefit the Hunter’s Hope Foundation.

Kelly and his wife, Jill, and their daughters Camryn and Erin, are running together on a relay team.

“There’s no possible way I could do seven miles. When I retired, people asked me, ‘Now that you’re retired, will you still run?’ I said, ‘I didn’t run when I played, and I sure don’t now,’” Kelly laughed. “I don’t know who’s going to anchor it, but we’re going to do it as a family.”

The “Kelly Tough” slogan gained fame as Kelly’s fans sent their support during his battle with cancer, something that inspired him.

“Everywhere I go, people say what inspiration their son, daughter or mother had, and I’m just overwhelmed at how bad cancer really is, how it can take your life and how many people are going through the same thing I’m going through,” he said. “I want people to know when they fight, they not only fight for themselves, they fight for their family, and that’s what kept me going.”

Kelly said one of his favorite quotes, “Make a difference today for someone who is fighting for tomorrow,” not only represented how his family kept positive attitudes and smiles through his whole journey, but what he wants to do with his future.

Early detection is the key to nearly every major disease because it offers the opportunity to do something about it, Kelly added, which is his pursuit through Hunter’s Hope. His goal is to have screenings at birth federally mandated and paid for by the government to make sure all children have the chance to pursue their dream.

Kelly said he’s been working out, gaining weight, and feeling well overall. While he’s thankful for his health and especially looking forward to visiting all the children who attend the camp and continuing to pursue goals with Hunter’s Hope, there are only two things on his bucket list.

“My two are walking both of my daughters down the aisle. I don’t care if I can crawl, that’s one thing I want to do, and I pray that the Lord allows me to do it. I’m not ready for it yet. They’re just 15 and 20 so there’s a few years left,” Kelly laughed. “The longer they wait, the longer I live.”

To register for the camp or the one-day clinic on July 14 at [St. John Fisher College in Rochester](#), visit [www.jimkellyfootballcamp.com](http://www.jimkellyfootballcamp.com).

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