

# Bob Watkins' Sports In Kentucky

## How long, Louie Dampier's Hall of Speech?; Wildcats are in full flirt-with-greatness



Bob Watkins

February. The rodent in Pennsylvania didn't see his shadow ... some of us forgot the Valentine's Day thing ... Jerry Tarkanian's name made it into same sentence with Dean Smith ... and pitchers and catchers reported to spring training.

Closer to home, a mammoth stampede on super markets Maysville to Bardwell preceded a mammoth snow storm. ... Mr. Lincoln's birthday came and went without fanfare ... and Louie Dampier gets another good-for-you! 15 minutes of fame by way of election to the Naismith Hall of Fame.

Since bettors in Las Vegas will take a wager on anything, what odds on length of Louie's speech: Minute-and-a-half? 39 seconds?

Then, Mother Nature sent us another snow storm. While it snowed and snowed and snowed, these historical gems surfaced.

√ Kentucky's basketball team caused telephones to ring again at Cliff Hagan's house and Frank Ramsey's too.

√ The Wildcats' 25-0 kept teevee talking heads and barbershop worrywarts jabbering, "but, can Kentucky beat Virginia?" ... "but, can Kentucky beat Wisconsin?"

√ By mid-month the cliché *flirtation-with-greatness* was in vogue again. But, wait a minute, Kentucky passed that one

already and moved along to word at the cliff's edge: **Grrreat!**

As over-used as *grrreat* is, these Wildcats are starting to well, play all-for-one and near the orbit of *grrreatness*.

Meanwhile, another snow storm is on the way.

### UGLY BALL?

An action photograph of Cliff Hagan (UK 1954) in the Lexington newspaper last Sunday brought to mind another era in college hoops. Hagan's image and the game in the 1950s reflected grace, skill and satin execution. Hagan could be logo guy for a time when the word often attached to college basketball was ballet.

A few days ago an internet columnist suggested college hoops in 2015 is ugly. I would add: It is too physical and too (ball-screen) repetitive. Most entertaining teams? Kentucky, Virginia, Arizona, Butler, Notre Dame and Duke.

The internet 'expert' added, "Kentucky's best attribute is sheer size and brute force and not terribly entertaining in and of itself.

Wrong! Not even close. Kentucky, at its best playing man-to-man defense is grandly entertaining. Too, no team I've seen, other than Arizona, is more artful running a fast break.

### JOHN CALIPARI

Buzz for John Calipari's nomination for induction to the Naismith Hall of Fame paralleled celebration of Jerry Tarkanian's coaching career. It brought to mind elements the two had/have in common.

√ Mold extraordinary players into **Team Think**. Often coaches fail for lack of skills to motivate and maximize talent.

√ Sell the formula - decision-making, recognize fast break opportunity (and not), dedication to clamp-

down man-to-man defense and confidence to play physical smartly.

√ Savvy. Tarkanian then and Calipari now calculates risk and has nerve enough to challenge the NCAA, operate at the edges of or around its rules without being held accountable.

### WORTH REPEATING DEPT.

John Feinstein's style and writing skills are superb and proven. His analysis, by design I like to think, is preachy, leaving fans to fume. Leaves others of us to re-examine facts.

The author of several books, Feinstein recently suggested **arrogance** is at the root of Kentucky's decline to play UTEP.

"Kentucky's refusal to play (Texas-El Paso) on the 50th anniversary of the most important college game ever played.

"Kentucky people always yammer about how (Adolph) Rupp was unfairly cast as a racist, villain. Fine, let's play the game and let the story be told from BOTH sides. THAT matters."

No, it doesn't matter.

Feinstein's notion that "Kentucky people always yammer ..." is his right as the writer. But facts seem to be above his passion pay grade. The NCAA title game March 19, 1966 was not the most important game ever played. It is a myth perpetuated by movie-makers (Glory Road) and writers who lift and embrace work and context from writers before them.

### Facts are ...

√ Context. The 1966 Texas Western is most often referred to as five black starters. One wonders how white members of the team felt about suddenly being not relevant?

√ History tells us two far more important college basketball games were played long before UTEP-Kentucky.

• As early as the 1940s

an all-white Duke team (Feinstein's alma mater) played an all-black college team in Durham.

• March 1963, an all-white Mississippi State team had courage to slip out of Starkville to play Loyola of Chicago in an NCAA Mideast Regional game before which (black) Jerry Harkness and (white) Joe Dan Gold shared an historic handshake. Contest? Courage and drama come from this game eclipses in time and impact UK-Texas Western three years later.

Finally, without emphasis on celebrating Texas Western's NCAA title and players from both teams in 1966, a Kentucky-UTEP game today is not yammer. It is irrelevant.

### FRANK RAMSEY

Frank Ramsey. A point-of-view expressed by the Hall of Famer in the Lexington Herald-Leader last week warmed a few hearts.

About Kentucky's suspended season, 1952-53, Ramsey said, "I actually enjoyed that year off. There was more time to put into your studies."

Brings us to a Washington Post story last week that reported some major-conference commissioners "want to revisit the idea of freshman ineligibility. Especially in men's basketball, where most players are required to attend school for only one year before pursuing a professional career and thus may not devote much attention to the academic side of things."

Logic? First-year students could benefit from an easier adjustment to academic and social challenges.

As unlikely as it is, a freshmen ineligibility rule could have an acronym: CTCL - Closing The Calipari Loophole.

And so it goes.

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## Wanderings from the Woods & Water

by Jay Bicknell

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## Are You A Salmon?

I hope all is well with everyone battling the snow storm and arctic blast. Everyone, stay safe and warm. To all the folks scraping and salting roads, THANK YOU!

The life cycle of the salmon has always intrigued me. The hand of God can be seen in the salmon life cycle. It's just awesome how so many other animals are dependent on salmon and how the cycle plays out.

A salmon is hatched in headwater streams. When they get big enough, they swim to the ocean. Then, after a few years in the ocean, they make the journey back to the headwater streams.

The journey back upstream is tough, battling waterfalls and swift water. The bears depend on the salmon run upstream for food. I read that 137 different animals depend on the salmon run for survival. As the salmon are swimming upstream they are in the process of dying.

Once the salmon reach their birthplace, they lay eggs for the next generation. Once eggs are laid, the salmon dies. The dead salmon add nutrients back to the water. The nutrients added by the dead salmon help the health of the stream. It helps the trees growing on the banks. It helps the next generation to be strong and healthy.

I titled this column "Are You a Salmon?" for multiple reasons. A salmon has to swim upstream; it goes against the flow. Do you just go with the flow or do you go against the current? Do you follow what the world says to do or follow

God's will for your life? Salmon help so many other animals survive. Do you help your fellow man or just don't care? Salmon makes the long swim upstream to make sure another generation makes it. They die so the next generation is strong and healthy. Are you filling the gap to make sure the next generation is going to become an upstanding citizen?

I think the salmon run is a way God shows us how we should live. Are you a salmon? Don't go with the flow of the world. Follow the narrow path and follow Jesus.

### Hunting and Fishing Licenses

Don't forget to renew your hunting and fishing licenses. The license year is almost up. Don't be caught without a license! Turkey time is just around the corner. Make sure you get your turkey tags for spring gobblers!

Until next week, get out and enjoy God's creation!



### Keep It Clean

I know it's cold out there, but if birdseed is wet and stale and sitting in your feeder, and the birds have stopped coming, it might be time to clean it out. Throw away the old seed, scrub the feeder with hot, soapy water, air dry and refill. Welcome back, birds!

E-mail: birdingbits@ejl.rr.com  
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### Teams Needed

## Estill County Church Basketball League

Any church interested in sponsoring a team in the Estill County Church Basketball League, call Danny Click at 606-643-5145.

## Spay/Neuter Funding

We are happy to announce that spay/neuter funds are again made available to our great county via the KY Spay/Neuter license program. Citizens throughout KY have elected to purchase the spay/neuter license plate to help reduce our pet overpopulation. If you have a pet that needs to be fixed, please contact: the Humane Society's Angels of Estill County at <ellenfrederick@windstream.net> or Peaceful Paws at <peacefulpawsky@aol.com>. Please act now as funds, as always, are limited! Thanks for your support.

NOTICE: Please do not call the Estill County Animal Shelter as they are not connected to this spay/neuter funding nor the groups.

**NEAL'S AUTO CENTER**  
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"I guess you were wondering why I never returned your extension \_\_\_\_\_?"

## SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Remove

TEEDLE \_\_\_\_\_

Plain

LIMPES \_\_\_\_\_

Below

RUNED \_\_\_\_\_

Hold

RANCHO \_\_\_\_\_

### TODAY'S WORD

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**Kruzers Newz**

Twin City Kruzers' next monthly meeting is likely on **Monday, March 2nd** at 7:00 p.m. in Irvine City Hall. Anyone interested in joining Twin City Cruizers needs to come to the meetings.

We were busy at our January and February meetings, planning car shows, car cruises and cruise-ins. We are looking forward to 2015. All events are free and open to anyone. There will be music, raffles, corn hole and door prizes. Bring your family and enjoy the beautiful vehicles in downtown Irvine. Dates will be announced in March.

Anyone interested in joining, needs to come to our meeting or call president Kenneth Tipton at 723-7554 or vice-president Darrell Hall at 723-3612.