

Labissiere Potential #1



Larry Vaught

He's already being projected as a potential No. 1 pick in the 2016 NBA draft and even coach John Calipari knows Kentucky fans are wanting to compare Skal Labissiere to former UK greats Anthony Davis and Karl-Anthony Towns.

Yet Labissiere's teammates says there is another side to the versatile, skilled 7-footer from Haiti.

"Skal is very fun. I feel like Skal is like a little kid to me. He is the goofball on the team," said junior guard Dominique Hawkins. "He is always goofing around. If you are sleeping, he is tickling your face or something like that. People don't really know, but he is goofy."

Could he be this season's Willie Cauley-Stein personality-wise for UK?

"I don't know. Depends on how he wears his hair," Hawkins laughed and said referring to the time Cauley-Stein dyed his hair blonde for a game.

Junior Marcus Lee is not opposed to being a jokester. But like Hawkins, he says Labissiere is the team's leader in that category already.

"Skal is definitely the biggest cut-up on the team. He has no off switch. He just keeps going and that is what is kind of cool about him. He is like a jolly person. That is what makes it so fun," Lee said. "When we come in for early workouts, half the team will be asleep and he will be in here

just annoying you. It's such a fun annoying thing that you love it."

Kentucky freshman guard Charles Matthews, who verbally committed to UK during his junior year, feels he's still under the radar with most UK fans.

"I don't have a problem with that. I think it keeps me competitive, keeps me humble and keeps me working hard and striving to be the best I can be," he said. "I don't create the rankings, so I can't tell you why I dropped last year. I just work hard and worry about things I can control."

He said summer pickup games were competitive and fun with players "getting after each other" daily. It also gave him a chance to get to know a player like Isaiah Briscoe better.

Since he was little, Walker Wood went to University of Kentucky basketball and football games. His father was a season ticket holder for UK basketball games and he also went to numerous UK football games.

"It was awesome growing up in the city (of Lexington)," said Wood.

The Lexington Lafayette junior quarterback gave his verbal commitment to UK the same night the Wildcats lost to Auburn. The 2017 recruiting class now has six commits, including quarterback Mac Jones of Florida.

Wood, a teammate of UK commit Landon Young, also had offers from Louisville and Cincinnati and had interest from Tennessee, Mississippi State, Pittsburgh, Wake Forest and Indiana.

Wood has been projected as an "athlete" at the Division I level and not a quarterback. He disagrees.

"They want my mindset to be and my mindset will be on playing quarterback," Wood said. "I am going to work my butt off and compete. I am not a 6-5 quar-

terback, so I guess people think I can't play quarterback in the SEC. I don't care if you are 7-4 or 4-foot, if you can lead a team and play football, you can quarterback."

"I had to work hard at quarterback coming into high school. In middle school, you are not a real quarterback. You just hand

off mainly. In high school you have to use your mind more, read plays, have the right mechanics, throw accurately."

He's not worried about quarterback Gunnar Hoak of Ohio being in the 2016 UK recruiting class or Jones in the 2017 class.

"Competition is competition. Anywhere you go

there will be somebody under you wanting your spot and someone maybe above you that you have to take that spot from," Wood said.

Going to be interesting to see how coach Mark Stoops' team rebounds from the beatdown it took at Mississippi State when it hosts Tennessee Saturday

night. The Vols probably should have won at Alabama and will give UK a lot of the same problems that State did.

While Tennessee quarterback Joshua Dobbs is not Dak Prescott of State, he's a legitimate dual threat and that has been bad news for the Cats this year.

Bob Watkins' Sports In Kentucky

Slow and surely, Rick Pitino moved to town called Complacency



Bob Watkins

So, Rick Pitino.

Louisville's coach did not attend ACC media days because he would be a distraction.

I wonder, "how ya gonna not talk about elephant-in-the-room from here to three months into next year?"

Pitino is handcuffed to the most gossip-rich words in America today this side of Hillary and Benghazi, Sex and scandal.

Since Katina Powell's 104-page sleaze surfaced, this spider web has encircled high school kids, so-called guardians, ex-players running for cover, one of whom called himself "The Elvis of Louisville."

Meanwhile, the Gotcha crowd at University of Kentucky, many of whom remember Cardinal fan fun fests on Wildcat basketball's Shame in the 1980s, are having a ball.

Words to describe it all? *Frantic and frenzy* fit media story lines for this provocative and electric topic in college sports today.

Frantic to pontificate first and with teevee preacher fervor reasons why Pitino is not the villain. And, a frenzy to sermonize on why he is.

Frantic to illuminate

most cleverly reasons why Da Coach is Richard Nixon redux and must go.

Frantic to be first to find the rat, Andre McGee, and, after a knuckle sandwich, make him talk.

Frenzy to discover who bank-rolled McGee's nefarious doings. A process remarkably like Dwane Casey's alleged air-mail package to Claud Mills at Kentucky that fell open in 1988.

Frantic to get ex-player Terrence Williams to expand on "I was the Elvis of Louisville."

Frantic to limit Minardi Hall Sugar Momma Katina Powell to 15 minutes of fame instead of 15 with Steve Kroft at 60 Minutes. Frenzy to damage control at UofL athletics.

- President Jim Ramsey endorsed director of athletics. Period.
- Tom Jurich nodded support for his ball coach. How does Jurich feel that AD job at Texas today?
- Associate AD Ken Klein and pecking order on down, everybody "just shut the hell up!"

Beyond the frantic and frenzy, permit me a bit of take-a-deep-breath context. Alleged doings at Louisville are shameful, but merely the latest in line of recent sex scandals in college sports. Syracuse basketball and Penn State football (2011) resulted in NCAA sanctions, firings, prison and iconic Joe Paterno died of a broken heart. In 2013, Vanderbilt football players were charged with rape then cleared. Worst of the worst this side of sex scandal, is academic fraud at North Carolina (over 18 years).

So, Rick Pitino.

The ball coach brains behind two national championships ... successful and pricey how-to motivational speaker and book writer assistant ... owner of thoroughbred horses ... member of Hall of Fame Club. Now linked to the tawdry again. McGee, Powell and self-appointed media supreme court.

I wonder

✓ A 63-year-old whose paycheck is more than \$200,000 a month, and net worth is \$25 million, and lives in a princely world behind gates, is not going to stop his life to check in on a college dormitory.

✓ Is a street-wise fast talker from New York going to remember his bouncing-hormone days and do diligence when hiring assistants to do the low-end work?

Apparently not, and so, the opening to nightmare for Louisville.

Irony, some time ago, when fame was assured, championships were expected more than celebrated, and hate levels from University of Kentucky fans had not cooled, and a sex scandal of his own had tattooed his legacy, Pitino began to change his address. Moved to town called Complacency.

A community where John Wooden lived across town from Sam Gilbert, Eddie Sutton and Billy Clyde Gillespie had gone to have another drink, and Bob Knight moved too after losing it when silly student said "what's up, Knight?"

So, Rick Pitino moved in.

Da Coach, as I fondly called him during his pieder days with Richie Farmer at Kentucky, is a prince fallen from the

throne, crown cock-eyed on his head, reduced to imploring the rat Andre McGee to "just tell the truth."

To say what? What could McGee say that would make anything go away?

Says here higher truths are already at hand.

- Success, riches, and fame do not change real life: "ya still have to put your britches on one leg at a time no matter your name or fame." In this instance, Lord of the Manor must trust watch over his castle only as far as he is willing to see ... all way down to the bloke working third shift at the draw bridge.
- Pitino, arguably the most poised and eloquent in his profession, declined the ACC meetings on advice of a lawyer looks like ducking out to fan base.
- And, versus-NCAA, Pitino has embraced the pathetic defense used by Jim Boeheim, Paterno, Roy Williams and John Calipari, "I didn't know what was going on therefore I am not responsible."

In the end, Pitino compromised at Louisville is reality not going away.

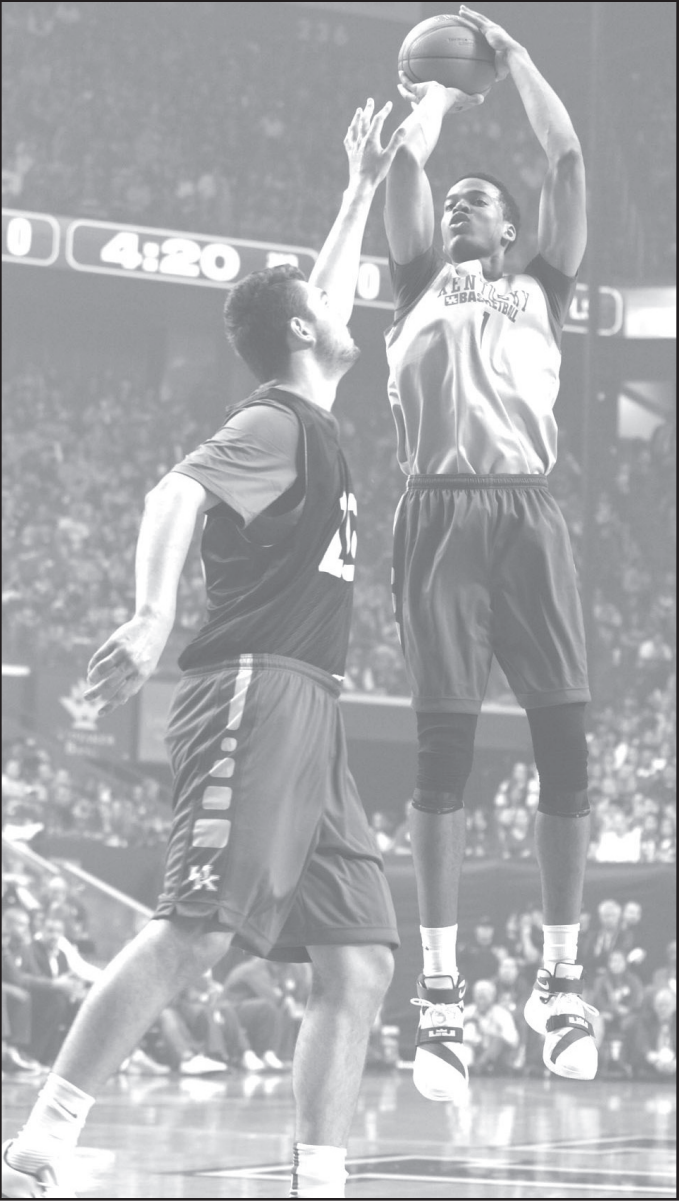
While President Ramsey squirms and tries to change the subject and Jurich bobs and weaves with votes of confidence, NCAA drums are beating and sanctions loom.

Central question to show on the marquee is almost rhetorical: Will parents of 5-star Johnny Jumpshot be sending their kid to Louisville?

Rick Pitino should resign with dignity and with dispatch.

And so it goes.

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Freshman Skal Labissiere could be the biggest cut-up on this year's Kentucky team based on what teammates say. He could also be the top pick in the 2016 NBA draft. (Vicky Graff Photo)



Attention Veterans



A Veterans Benefits Field Representative will be at the National Guard Armory, 335 Cow Creek Road, Ravenna, on Thursday, November 5th and normally the first Thursday of each month. The hours are 1:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Veterans and their dependants will receive assistance filing for Federal and state veterans benefits. This service is provided free of charge by the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs. To apply, veterans need to furnish copies of pertinent documentation to verify eligibility. For further information, please call toll free within Kentucky, 1-866-376-0308, to speak with a Veterans Benefits Field Representative.



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