

Bob Watkins' Sports In Kentucky

Commonwealth D1s send football faithful home with painful oh-fer



Bob Watkins

In a week of higher-than-usual hopes, college fans for the Commonwealth's big three were sent home with a single collective sentiment to cover all. "... just kinda speechless."

Winless Louisville on Thursday, unbeaten Western Kentucky and Kentucky on Saturday dealt their faithful a particularly painful oh-fer because it reminded us anew of opportunity lost.

On Thursday, Louisville had a statement-game chance in the ACC. Clemson played ugly, but handed the Cardinals another humble pie just the same.

Saturday afternoon Western Kentucky had Big Ten Indiana on its heels before: A. Hilltoppers ran out of gas; B. Pushed a self-destruct button; or C. Both.

Saturday night Kentucky was at the threshold of its best chance against Florida since Ferdinand won the Derby and a postage stamp was 22 cents.

Was league home opener coming off a road win against the Ole Ball Coach. There was the Cat Walk, a rising profile in the SEC, national ranking in the cards, a gaggle of high school recruits come to watch. Then Kentucky laid an egg, a large one against Florida.

On the same weekend,

fans headed home "... just kinda speechless."

A pair of sentences to summarize.

- Opportunities lost.

And ...

- NEXT!

✓ Louisville can re-set its bowl game sights with Samford (2-1) to beat up on at home.

✓ Western Kentucky hosts Miami-Ohio (1-2) in a match that may dazzle Erik Jenkins (WKU's track coach). Miami surrendered 95 points the last two weeks in losses to Wisconsin (58-0) and Cincinnati (37-33).

Kentucky gets Missouri (3-0). The Tigers had trouble scoring, beat UConn 9-6 last week which bodes well for a UK's defense that was superb again.

At stake, an SEC-East pecking order place not with, but behind Florida and Georgia.

ANALYST JESSE PALMER

Jesse Palmer earned two college degrees at Florida through 2001. A fan watching games that involve Kentucky to which Palmer-the-teevee-analyst is assigned, could be persuaded he is a Big Blue fan.

Last season Palmer, who quarterbacked for Steve Spurrier in The Swamp, fawned over Patrick Towles predicting UK's quarterback would become the SEC's best.

During the UK-Florida game last week Palmer marveled on-air about Commonwealth Stadium, UK's facilities and improved player talent level.

All good stuff for Big Blue fans. But surprising since ...

Quarterback who through a 75-yard touchdown pass and rushed for four touchdowns in a 59-31 Gators'

win over Kentucky Wildcats in 2000.

Epilogue: Brent Musburger, partner to Palmer, tossed journalistic responsibility into the trash can in a halftime swoon over UK's basketball coach. Each man stepping on the other's lines amid the gaga. I half expected Musburger to ask for the ball coach's hand in marriage.

WORTH REPEATING DEPT.

Seth Davis is a college hoops analyst for television, and Sports Illustrated writer who penned what I consider the definitive biography on John Wooden.

Before John Calipari's induction into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame two weeks ago, Davis wrote a 1,423-word piece about Kentucky's coach. A poignant excerpt:

"Such is the bundle of contradictions (Calipari) that will take to the podium in Springfield: the flashy grinder, the humble marketer, the servant leader and conspiracy theorist with a Pittsburgh-sized chip on his shoulder. His chin jutted, his heart swelled, his spirit full of gratitude, John Calipari will officially assume his place among the game's all-time greats. Then he will spend the rest of his career trying to prove he belongs."

MEDIA HOOPS NEWS

Blue Ribbon Yearbook. With Kentucky at the top BRY showed off its college basketball preseason Top 25 recently. The Wildcats are followed by three ACC teams Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, then Kansas.

Surprises?

- One other SEC team in first 25, Vanderbilt at No. 14

and no LSU.

- Four ACC teams in top 25 and none named Louisville.

- Highest ranked Big Ten team? Indiana at 13.

Bleacher Report offered its best player in every league in the country.

✓ SEC best is Damian Jones at Vanderbilt.

✓ West Coast Conference best: Kyle Wiltjer, Gonzaga.

The Sporting News. Kentucky string-bean freshman Skal Labissiere is a pre-season favorite for second team All-American honors. Classmate Jamal Murray is listed on TSN's third team.

LOUISVILLE HOOPS

Good news for ex-Louisville stars Edgar Sosa and Montrezl Harrell.

Sosa, who has played professionally in four countries, was preparing to play in Italy again when NBA Atlanta called. This week the Hawks have themselves a point guard prospect to compete with Jeff Teague.

Harrell, heretofore unhappy about being passed over early and often in the June Draft, has a guaranteed \$3.1 million deal for three seasons with the Houston Rockets. Among those Harrell will compete for playing time: ex-UK star Terrence Jones

PARTING SHOT

Fan (trick?) question: Did Florida win Saturday's game or did Kentucky lose it?

Not able to score a touchdown, Kentucky lost. From the start, pass dropped in end zone, inability to score from Florida's 2-yard-line late, spotty quarterback play throughout, Kentucky clearly lost an opportunity game more than Florida won.

And so it goes.

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Wanderings from the Woods & Water

by Jay Bicknell
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End of Days

Before I get started, I've got to wish my daughter Bailey "Happy 13th Birthday!" Wow, I have a teenager!

This column is not about the outdoors. This column is my opinion on the times we are living in. It might be offensive, but it's the way I see things.

Isaiah 5:20, "Woe to them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."

Our President makes a deal with the devil Iran and the likes of Mitch McConnell doesn't even fight. Democrat or Republican for the most part is like a two-headed snake. You follow the heads back to find the same body. This deal with Satan will force Israel (God's Chosen People) to strike Iran. In the deal, America will protect Iran if Israel strikes. We protect a country who hates us and has been a part of killing American soldiers.

Genesis 12:3, "God will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel."

A thug in Ferguson, Missouri by the name of Mike Brown is held up as hero while cops are treated like criminals. The great divider Barack Obama holds up the thugs and bashes the police. I guess only certain lives matter to him. I wonder if Trooper Ponder's life mattered to our President. Police (heroes) have a really tough job and our President is making their jobs even harder. He has basically helped put a bull's eye on every cop's back. Where are you Mitch? Mr. McConnell, you should be on the news every day, standing against Obama.

The government throws welfare out like candy to the druggies and deadbeats. They

get the best free health care available. Our American heroes who have bled for this country have to fight for benefits they have earned. Our veterans get to go to the VA; the same VA who has failed our veterans. Doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

Our tax dollars are going to Planned Parenthood and abortion clinics. They have been caught selling aborted baby parts. The liberals want it overlooked and Mitch is afraid to put up a fight. The media has swept the selling of baby parts under the rug. The media was more upset over a lion named Cecil getting killed than baby part sales! So, Christians, your tax dollars will keep going to fund abortions thanks to a coward by the name of Mitch McConnell.

Matthew 24:9, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you and ye shall be hated of all nations for my names sake."

A lady by the name of Kim Davis stood up for her religious beliefs and was jailed. The Constitution, I guess, no longer applies to Christians. Apparently the 1st Amendment doesn't apply to all. It only applies if you fit the agenda.

This has nothing to do with the outdoors for a reason! Call me crazy, but I think we are in the last days of the last days. I have studied prophecy for years now and seeing Bible prophecy being fulfilled daily is awesome and scary. It's awesome because it strengthens my faith daily. It's scary because so many people don't know Jesus as the end nears. I write this column with the hopes that the lost might read and have their eyes opened.

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

Salato Wildlife Center To Host Free National Hunting and Fishing Day Celebration Sept. 26

Forest Service recognizes National Public Lands Day, waives recreation fees

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources invites people of all ages to participate in a celebration of hunting, fishing and the great outdoors at the Salato Wildlife Education Center in Frankfort on Saturday, Sept. 26. Activities and demonstrations will run from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern time). Admission into the center is free during this event.

Governor Steve Beshear has proclaimed Sept. 26 as National Hunting and Fishing Day in Kentucky. Congress first designated the fourth Saturday in September as National Hunting and Fishing Day in 1972.

The activities being held at the Salato Center recognize the contributions to conservation made by 713,000 Kentucky hunters and anglers, and the 35,000

jobs that hunting, fishing and outdoor activities support.

Activities at the Salato Center for this special event will include 3-D archery, archery trap shooting, air rifles, laser shot, and fishing and casting. Poles and bait will be provided to participants. A falconry presentation will also be featured, as well as a hunting retriever dog demonstration.

Groups including the Kentucky Hunter Education Association, Kentucky Outdoor Sportsmen Alliance, Quail Forever and The Central Kentucky Hunting Retriever Association will be present for this event. Concessions provided by the Western Hills High School FFA will be available during the event.

For a detailed list of activities and times, contact the

center at (502) 564-7863.

The Salato Center is operated by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. The center features animals in naturalized enclosures, conservation displays and hiking trails through a variety of habitats. A 5-month-old bobcat kitten is regularly on display between 2-3 p.m.

The center is located off U.S. 60, approximately 1 1/2 miles west of the U.S. 127 intersection. Look for the bronze deer statue at the entrance of the main Kentucky Fish and Wildlife campus.

Normal hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Salato is closed on Sunday, Monday and state holidays.

In recognition of National Public Lands Day, Sept. 26, fees will be waived next

weekend at several recreation areas in the Daniel Boone National Forest.

On Friday, Sept. 25 and Saturday, Sept. 26, no recreation fee pass is required for overnight campers in the Red River Gorge backcountry, Barren Fork Horse Camp in McCreary County, or Bee Rock Campground along the Rockcastle River of Laurel and Pulaski counties.

On Saturday, Sept 26, no recreation fee pass is required at the following locations:

- Cave Run Lake – all boat ramps outside of developed campgrounds
- Laurel River Lake – all boat ramps outside of developed campgrounds
- Redbird Crest Trail, Clay and Leslie counties
- White Sulphur ATV Trail, Bath County



Vacation Advice

When I go on vacation, I shut down the bird garden. The birds are all right, because they do not depend on me for food. They do quite nicely with their God-given instincts. As soon as I return, though, I fill my central tray feeder and the birds are back in no time!

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