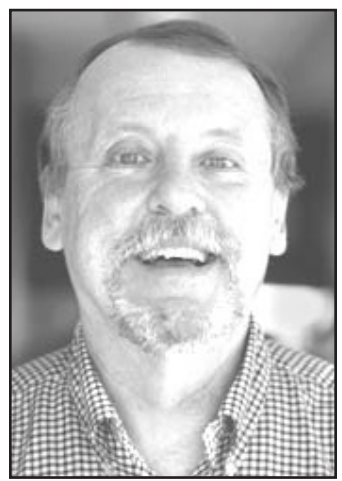


Jamal Murray



Larry Vaught

Two of Jamal Murray's former Canadian high school teammates say not to worry about how he'll keep playing this season at Kentucky.

"He will get better as time goes. He will pick it up and he's already doing great," said 7-footer Thon Maker of Athlete Institute in Canada, who was a one-time UK recruit. "It's the same Jamal we played with last year. He's just getting used to the level of play and style of play of his teammates and the college level but eventually

you will see the true Jamal. You've not seen that yet."

Matur Maker's, the 6-10 younger brother of Thon Maker, recently talked to Murray's father and has watched his games.

"He is looking good out there. He has done pretty good. I thought his defense might be a little bit of a struggle, but he has stepped it up. He is aggressive and that's good for him," Matur Maker said during last week's McCracken County Mustang Madness. "We were really intense at practice last year and he liked that. I would go at him, he would go at me. He would go at Thon and Thon at him. It was aggressive. That helped us. Off the court, he is family and we just enjoy ourself."

We had a really good year with him. His character will take him a long way. He's a nice guy, funny guy. When he comes on the court, he is aggressive and knows it is time to switch it on. I like that mentality. He has the right mindset that will take



Former high school teammates say they have not been surprised by Jamal Murray's success this year and expect him to do even more. (Vicky Graff Photo)

him a long way."

Thon Maker says Murray is a "cool guy" that liked to make jokes and hang out with teammates.

"But before games he gets in his own zone, but off the court he is just a great guy to hang with," Thon Maker said.

The brothers said they were not surprised when Murray reclassified so he could play in college this year rather than returning to their team.

"He told me he was thinking about it. I kind of knew. I didn't know where he would end up, but I knew he would reclassify because we talked. But him deciding on Kentucky was a great move and will be good for his future," Thon Maker said.

"When we got there they were saying he might reclassify. He went on in the season and things got good, so he did it and it was obviously the right choice for him," Matur Maker said.

New Zealand's Tai Wynyard looks like he'll have a chance to earn playing time for John Calipari based on the struggle of UK's interior players way too often this season.

"He does a lot of things. We were very surprised by his talent," UK freshman Jamal Murray said. "I played with him at (Nike) Hoop Summit, so did Skal (Labissiere). He comes in and gives us some girth and some toughness. He does the plays that we need to have. He's just got to learn all the plays, all the sets and he'll be fine."

Junior Marcus Lee says Wynyard will eventually "be ready to add something" to the team once he gets fully acclimated to the offense, defense and conditioning.

"Once he gets ready and situated, I think he will contribute a lot," Lee said.

Kentucky assistant coach Kenny Payne said conditioning has been an issue for

Wynyard since he joined the team in late December.

"We're trying to get him in the type of shape where he can go out and play whatever minutes that we give him," Payne said. "He's really strong and a big kid. He sets great screens and rebounds. We've just got to get him in shape."

Calipari likes Wynyard's temperament.

"He's got a great mentality about it, but if he ran up and down the court three or four times he'd probably be exhausted," the UK coach said. "We have some other guys that look the same way and have been here awhile. He's a pretty bright kid. He's doing some good stuff."

Jarred Vanderbilt, one of the nation's top-ranked juniors, seems to have a high interest in Kentucky. He was in Paducah last week playing in the McCracken County Mustang Madness and will be in Pulaski County in February for two more games.

The 6-9 Vanderbilt has 3-point range and had a triple-double in his first game in Paducah.

"I am real high on Calipari," Robert Vanderbilt, a former Prairie View A&M assistant coach and Jarred's father, said. "He is an all-around good guy. Our first conversation last year he asked what I wanted for Jarred and I said I want what is best for him. I was impressed with the way he handled himself. We are very high on coach Cal. He's a good coach, good all-around person. His program is not about him, but his kids. We have a lot of respect for him."

Calipari obviously feels the same about a 6-9 player who can handle the ball, shoot the 3-pointer, rebound, make accurate passes or do about anything else.

"He is an old school Magic Johnson. He can play any position on the court," his father said. "He handles the ball so well for a 6-9 kid. He's just a rare player."

Wanderings from the Woods & Water

by Jay Bicknell
CorridorHR@Gmail.Com



Teal and the Master

My boys are in the process of looking for a new lab puppy. As they look for that new pup, the memories flow about my Lab Teal. This is an old column, but one of my favorites.

Teal was a 60 pound black Labrador Retriever. She was a tenacious, hard-charging duck dog. She only had one master and that was me. She taught me more than I ever taught her.

We got Teal when she was 4 months old. Actually, my wife got her as a pet 13 years ago. I saw Teal as an opportunity to get into duck hunting. I watched a few training videos and started getting her ready for the upcoming hunting season. Before I knew it, Teal was my dog 100% and had snubbed my wife. Teal's mission in life was to make me, her master, happy.

I taught her how to be one heck of a duck dog. She did it all, took hand signals, did blind retrievals with ease, and even passed every hunt test she ran in. Teal did everything I asked of her without hesitation.

Teal taught me many things too. We were hunting the river on a 10-degree morning when my brother-in-law shot a duck in the middle of the river. I sent Teal and she went without hesitation into freezing water to chase down a crippled duck and bring it back.

We were hunting a slough covered in lotus so thick you could barely see the water. I shot a wood duck in the middle of the lotus jungle. I sent Teal into this mess after the crippled duck and she went without hesitation. She was out of sight busting through the lotus for at least 30 minutes. I came to the conclusion the duck was a lost cause. She would not give up. Another 15 minutes passed when she came out of the lotus, face bleeding and raw, with the duck.

Again, we were hunting Station Camp Creek when a friend of mine shot a duck on the other side of the stream. Teal didn't see the duck fall. But I sent her and again, she went without hesitation. She got to the other side of the

stream and I gave a whistle blast, she turned to watch me. I gave the back left hand signal, she did it perfectly. Then I gave another blast, she turned and I gave her a left over signal. She went left and made an awesome blind retrieval.

A year ago last January Teal made her last retrieval for her master. Her body was covered with cancer and started to shut down. We went for one last retrieval. I grabbed a retrieving bumper and tossed it for her. I sent Teal and she went without hesitation even with her hurting body. She brought it back and went to sleep in my arms. If real men don't cry then I am not a real man.

So what did Teal teach me?

She taught me when the master asks you to do something, you do it without hesitation. She taught me to trust the master no matter what the circumstance. She taught me when the master asks you, don't give up until it's done. She taught me to listen and look for signals from the master. She taught me that no matter how bad it gets, follow the master's commands. She taught me to only follow one master. And she taught me to LOVE serving the master.

I will tell you straight up, I love Jesus. I feel like the Lord talks to us every day, we just have to listen. I try my best to live for the Master the way Teal taught me. I fall short every day, but I keep striving. It's funny how the Master talks to us, are you listening?

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

Birding BITS BY Cindy Brook

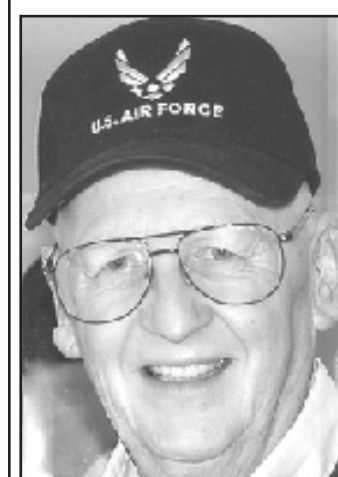
Fresh Water

Even though it's cold out there, backyard birds still need fresh water. Birdbaths don't have to be fancy. Just make sure they're easy to clean and shallow enough so small birds will use them. Many online or local sources carry decifiers and heated birdbaths. The birds will thank you.

E-mail: birdingbits@flrr.com
© 2010 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Bob Watkins' Sports In Kentucky

Calipari-to-NBA buzz was more what-if than what-is ... for now



Bob Watkins

If this week's early buzz (Yahoo Sports speculation) had been true that John Calipari is shopping himself on the NBA market and any mogul interested in his services, bids begin at \$120 million, then Kentucky had an earth-shaker story, right? Nah. For now.

Kentucky's ball coach arose Monday morning to find himself where he loves to be, near the center of attention. A headline or two down the front page from lottery numbers, bad boy Sean Penn shenanigans and whatever the loons in north Korea's are doing.

In age of Twitter, whatever rumors could be easily stamped out. Scenario: Bedazzled young Kentucky fan telephones Big Blue Line, in a mournful tone inquires, "Say it ain't so, Cal. Say it ain't so."

Then, along with Big Blue Nation and one-and-done prospects for next season, kid sits back and listens to a perfectly plausible denial.

"I absolutely have the best coaching job in sports and I plan on being at Ken-

tucky for a long time. I am not negotiating with ANYBODY. My total focus is on this team and winning the next game."

Poof! Calipari tweeted late Monday morning stopped that one in its tracks.

On behalf of the kid, it would've been good if he had added, "I already have all the money one human being could ever need ... Kentucky is my dream job ... I am devoted to Big Blue Nation."

Addendum. A Big Blue Nation devotee offered his context for Yahoo Sports' mischievous what-if, "That tired, worn 'raise the flag and see if anybody salutes it' rumor comes up with regularity re Coach Cal. Doesn't matter how often he denies it, or what words he chooses to express his denial. So, now it's heard again for the umpteenth time."

SPECULATION STILL FUN

Speculation and suspense stoke the scuttlebutt fires in wintertime around rumor-loving BBN, don't they? Part of the entertainment.

Last Monday an internet headline blared: Calipari tells Nets he wants \$120 million to return to NBA.

In spite of Calipari denials, Yahoo columnist Adrian Wojnarowski's piece was an intriguing chain-of-events. Though it amounted to more Monday morning what-if than what-is. Had gaps to close too. For me, his piece violated spell-it-out obligation to

readers - where, why and to whom Calipari communicated things he wanted and when?

Wojnarowski's column was ignited by Brooklyn's firing coach Lionel Hollins the day before, followed by what-if links drawn to Calipari flirtations with Cleveland in 2014 then New Orleans a year later.

Add on a bidding war between two sputtering NBA franchises alleged to ready to throw lotto level money - Brooklyn and Sacramento to added plausibility. Toss in a friendship link - Calipari and Nets CEO Brett Yormark, and hey.

Next, reaching to last year, UK's coach allegedly told Sacramento owners it would take \$11 million-plus a year "to get his attention." He had already said no to a 10-year, \$80 million-plus offer from Cleveland, Wojnarowski wrote, adding, that offer had become Calipari's baseline. He wants the 10 years and \$12 million-a-year Phil Jackson makes to run the New York Knicks.

Major selling point to Brooklyn involves Calipari delivering ex-Kentucky stars DeMarcus Cousins and John Wall to the Nets when they become free agents in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

All of it intriguing, reasonable, believable and entertaining. By late Monday morning however, Calipari had tossed cold water on the embers.

Leaves us with two items, a rule to remember and a delicious new bit of conjecture.

Rule: Beware of splash stories on Mondays, especially opinion pieces. They are designed to grab attention on a slow day.

New conjecture: Who will be on your list as next-coach-at-Kentucky?

WORTH REPEATING DEPT.

Fan reactions to Calipari-to-NBA rumors, a sampling ...

• I can't imagine Cal taking an NBA job at any price. He makes millions a year now. He is the star.

• I don't think he's TOO serious at this time. I do believe he's planning his 'escape' from Kentucky in a year or two, should recruited talent not pan out and he has couple of unproductive years. Instead of sticking around to show the world how he can still produce magic in the Bluegrass, he'll duck and run to the money, using that as an excuse for failure."

And, from Kentucky Sports Radio ...

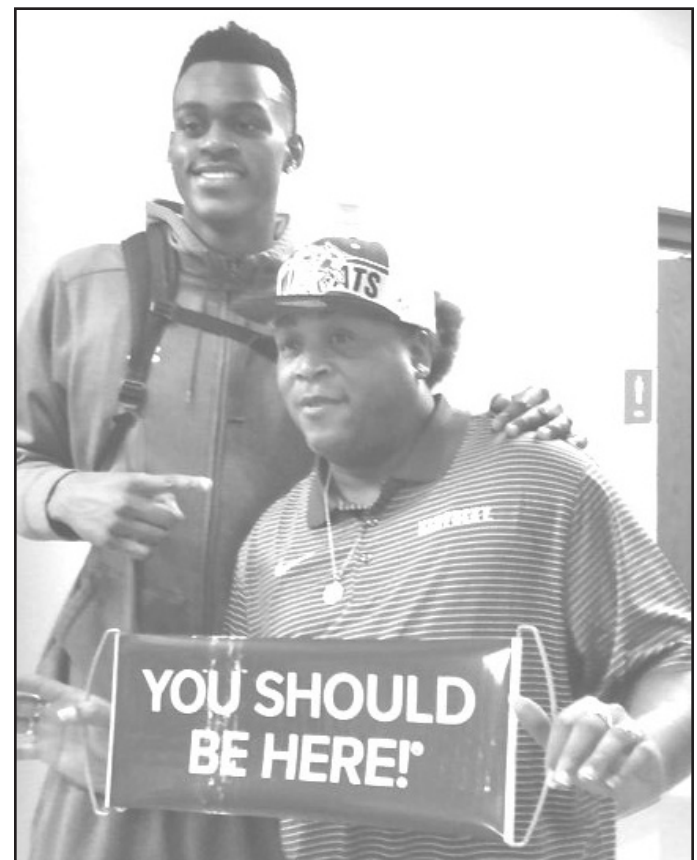
• Cal does not need to teach NBA players. ... All he has to do is drive the bus to the arena.

• Cal screams at his players. A lot. You can hear him on TV and I've been told it gets downright uncomfortable in the arena at times.

And a favorite.. "Let Cal go. (We) true Kentucky fans would like Pinto back."

"You, Sir, are an idiot. That is all."

And so it goes. You can reach me at <bob.Watkins24@aol.com.



Junior Jarred Vanderbilt had no trouble understanding where this fan at the McCracken County Mustang Madness wants him to play his college basketball. (Larry Vaught/Verizon Photo)