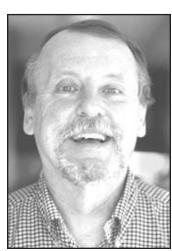
Most Media Members Expect Close Win Over Louisville



by Larry Vaught

No one should have a better feel about what basketball matchup than Seton Hall coach Kevin Willard, the son of former UK assistant coach Ralph Willard.

Hall a week before UK lost in overtime to Seton Hall in Madison Square Gar-

much more physical, has a much more physical presence inside," Kevin Willard said. "I think Louball much better."

Calipari paid attention with his team. quickly to what first-year Louisville coach Chris out of 'Camp Cal' an im-Cardinals.

tremely hard. Like these dudes are fighting to win games. Their coach is holding them accountable. He get into a better rhythm," win," Calipari said several weeks ago on his weekly radio show.

has changed since the mine the game." season started.

Reid Travis and PJ Washington will present some serious matchup issues for the Cardinals. UofL did beat a Michigan State throws hurt the Spartans and that's been a strength for Kentucky thus far," voice of the UK Radio Network, said.

Kentucky Sports Radio's Tyler Thompson and Rvan Lemond also both think Kentucky will win.

close, particularly if the Cats don't improve their perimeter defense. Louisville is averaging just under nine 3's per game and Kentucky's 3-point defense is one of the worst in the country," Thompson said. "Kentucky can control the inside with PJ Washington and Reid Travis and burn the Cards in transition with Keldon ing against Duke in the just never worked out. Johnson. It's just a matter of keeping Louisville from seizing momentum with 3's. This will be Kentucky's first true road game, after all."

Lemond thinks after last year's blowout win by the ent, but that isn't what during baseball season). Cats that this game will be nail-biter.

comes down to the final minute with UofL having

buzzer but UK ironically tougher game for Kenmakes a big defensive tucky than he envisioned play to win it," Lemond several months ago. Howsaid.

a Louisville win.

"At this point, UofL point shooting. appears to be far better 77-65," Glover said. "Honmight happen in Satur- how underwhelming this ville, I like their chances," day's Kentucky-Louisville Kentucky team has been. Leach said. Kentucky's play this summer gave every indication ings about the game have that they could be a dominant team. Yet they find in the last few months themselves in a danger-Louisville won at Seton ous position of seeing a most fans have. high NCAA seed slip away in December."

ing editor Jeff Drummond Bahamas trip, Louisville "I think Kentucky is is going with UK in a close has exceeded theirs. Mack win because he feels the has Louisville playing Cats are more talented hungry, sound basketand will have the best ball. The Cards' resume two players in the game. includes wins over then isville shoots the basket- He's also basing his pick No. 9 Michigan State and on Calipari having more Seton Hall -- a team that Kentucky coach John practice time recently beat Kentucky a week

Mack was doing with the proved basketball team, players will be anxious and with the departure to further prove them-"They're playing ex- of Quade Green, possibly one with a more streamlined rotation where the talented freshmen can That is going to be a remost people on both sides his feelings. ally hard game for us to of the rivalry assumed this was a big win for UK thought they would be, going into the season.

Will Kentucky win? a really nice job early would be. Louisville can That was the overwhelm- with the Cardinals, and shoot it, and UK has trouing assumption when the the Yum Center will be ble guarding the outside season started. Now it is absolutely electric with shot. That should make not as clear cut, so I asked UofL fans sensing a vul- for an interesting game," several media members nerable UK team coming he said. who cover UK basketball into their house. How the who they think wins Sat- Cats' freshmen respond ception of the matchup environment may deter-

"I'll take the Wildcats Blue Insider is picking terback Amani Gilmore. based on their bigs. I think Kentucky but admits The 6-2, 190-pound Gilmthe game has gone from ore led Amite High School where it would have been to the Class AA state title a huge upset for Louisville while throwing for over to win to a toss up.

team with a strong inside is defending the 3-point title game he accounted game but missed free line and that is somewhere Louisville excels," he said.

Tom Leach, play-by-play Keith Taylor believes UK left-handed pitcher who players will have a "chip wants to play both baseon their shoulder" at the ball and football at UK. Yum Center that will pay dividends.

"Kentucky will have more to gain than the Car-"However, it will be dinals and will pull it out, although the game will be a tight squeeze. Kentucky will finally see a breakthrough away from home. Kentucky wins 74-68," Taylor predicted.

Taylor is the only media member who doesn't said. "I wasn't good have a different perspective on the game now than he did three months ago.

Champions Classic, Kentucky has shown an ability to overcome adversity and those experiences way. I feel like he's too talwill help against the Cardinals," Taylor said. "The practice every other day, Wildcats have more talwill be the difference There's no reason where maker this time around. It a guy with that kind of tal-"This year the game will be the team's ability ent shouldn't go explore it terrific non-conference said. "If we are not playto win a close game."

Leach is with those

ever, he says that's more a Larry Glover, host of the compliment to what Mack daily Larry Glover Live on has done with the Cardi-WVLK-AM, was the only nals than anything UK has media member to predict not done, especially when it comes to Louisville's 3-

"Kentucky doesn't have than we anticipated and to rain down 3's on the Kentucky is just the op- opponent but the Cats posite. With the game must minimize the gap at the Yum Center, I think between how many they the Cards pick off the Cats make and how many they give up. If they do a good estly, I pretty surprised by job of that against Louis-

Thompsonsaidherfeel-"dramatically" changed — just like the feelings of

"Not only is Kentucky not meeting the expecta-Cats Illustrated manag- tions fans had after the later -- and a close loss at "I look for them to come Indiana," Thompson said.

"Mack and Louisville's selves against their rival; whether or not Kentucky matches that intensity will decide the game."

Lemond, as always, is doesn't care about names. Drummond said. "I think blunt and honest about

"UK isn't as good as I and Louisville is much "Chris Mack has done better than I thought they

One of the more intriguwith Kentucky during the early signing period last Curtis Burch of Big weekwas Louisiana quar-2,000 yards and running "Kentucky's weakness for 1,000 more. In the yards and six scores.

But Gilmore is also a Kentucky Today's talented outfielder and He has Kentucky coach Mark Stoops' blessing to do that, too.

Stoops said he felt he didn't try to play both sports.

player coming out of high school and wanted to do that in college. I never got the opportunity," Stoops enough really, to be honest with you, to play both

that opportunity and I don't want him to feel that ented. He could throw. We 15 practices (in the spring and go throw a little bit.



ville Saturday. (Jeff Houchin Photo)

will be good to see him rally before losing. (play baseball)."

"Throws a great deep his passes," Hiles said. throws on the field in the game I watched live and it looked like it was some inconsistent mechanics. body. They keep getting Got either a little lazy on better. They are going to for 366 of his team's 442 overpower the throw or the SEC. I think they are signing five in-state playrush the throw."

Still, Hiles believes he's a "steal" for Kentucky. Gilmore didn't play football as on a night when you get schools and was involved in baseball during many of the evaluation camps before his senior season.

"I was a dual-sport the board. He will have to adapt to the speed of the the talent we will have This year, they have gothe could be the backup (next year).

"A.J.Rose, Lynn Bowden, and was always scrapping Justin Rigg and others "Aside from its show- for a position, got hurt. It would take the pressure "I always wish I had lookslikehehasthemakeup to not be too flustered but it would be best for the SEC. him not to be thrown to the SEC wolves, though."

the NCAA Tournament and get better. There is last year, Kentucky wom- not much wiggle room for a chance to win it at the who believe this is a much ball coach) Nick (Min-ville where the Cats made really, really different.

eastern Conference. "Rhyne Howard is one team we want to be."

urday and how their per- to their first really hostile ing players that signed ball and has a little juice of them, Maci Morris is a in his legs. Has zip on gifted shooter, and then point guard Taylor Mur-"Seems very composed ray doesn't make a lot of and the moment wasn't mistakes. She is tough," too big for him. Left some Insell said after Kentucky beat his team.

"I think they have three as good of players as anyas good as Tennessee. Mississippi State is pretty good, but you never know a junior after changing them here at home and the ball well, anything could happen."

Insell said coach Matgood but not great across Cats lost at Middle Tennessee.

game," Hiles said. "With just out-toughed them, surrounding him, I think ten stronger and are more experienced and seem to have a little bit more of a swagger about them," In- 3: "He has done a phesell said.

off him in any game. It sure, though, his team understands any swagger can quickly disappear in

"I think what is impornow is to embrace the pro-After failing to make cess of trying to improve

gione) can use an arm. It a dramatic fourth-quarter "It is so important for us right now to maintain a Middle Tennessee positive attitude, to come Former Kentucky de- coach Rick Insell thinks every single day and fensive back Van Hiles Kentucky has three play- build the habits of staying lives in Louisiana and got ers that would start for strong with max effort. to see Gilmore play this any team in the South- I think those two things can really help us be the

Quote of the Week:

"I'm always going to go where my boss wants me to go. It was just a thing where we ... Don't take any credit away from John Schlarman. He really did a good job there, I just came in and just closed it out," UK recruiting coordinathe easy throws, tried to cause some problems in tor Vince Marrow on UK ers last week after failing to sign a player the previous season.

Quote of the Week 2: "He was struggling from you shoot and rebound the line ... I thought they fouled me. Then Travis (Ford) shot free throws for Andre (Riddick). I "He played in the clas- thew Mitchell has a "lot don't know how he got Gilmore would "regret" if sification that I played better ball team" than he away with that. The three and the talent level is did a year ago when the of us got suspended (by coach Rick Pitino) and Andre did not," former "Last year I think we UK basketball player on shooting free throws at Vanderbilt in 1993 after teammate Gimel Martinez was fouled.

Quote of the Week nomenal job. The way Mitchell wants to make they have recruited and the caliber of talent they have got, they look like a SEC football team now. In years past Kentucky football did not necessartant for our team right ily look like that but they have identified talent, developed depth. I am very happy with the job he has done," former UK all-SEC en's basketball has had a us," the Kentucky coach receiver Craig Yeast the new football coach at run this season. The only ing max effort and max Kentucky Wesleyan — on "And I'm sure (UK base- loss was at No. 4 Louis- positive attitude, we look the job Mark Stoops is doing at UK.