

Bob Watkins' Sports In Kentucky

Major League Baseball at halftime, still the bedrock of American Sport



Bob Watkins

Major League Baseball. Our grand old game reached its half-way mark last week-end, 81 games played, 81 left.

Nothing quite like the regal old game for those of us who ignore the critics "... too slow, too long, too boring, too old." Baseball remains the bedrock of American sport. Beautiful and precise. Game of inches on a green ... sounds, smells, strategies and seventh inning stretch and ageless anthem.

"Take Me Out to The Ball game ... I don't care if I ever get back!"

Then, statistics to affirm whatever we want them to in debate. To wit: Ted Williams was best there ever was. Or, was it Joe DiMaggio? Think of it, they played eons ago, but we know them as if they played yesterday.

They link us to America's Pastime for a life time as much as Field of Dreams, The Natural and Eight Men Out.

Baseball and money? We take pleasure in seeing underdogs – small market teams with modest budgets – compete well enough with the Cadillac crowd. The Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Yankees whose estimated payrolls are \$212 million and \$208 million respectively.

Meanwhile, the Milwaukee Brewers's payroll is \$91.6; St. Louis Cardinals \$99.9 and the Pittsburgh Pirates \$71.5 million.

Attendance at all three ball parks is up from 2013.

Where is your favorite team in the standings this week? Still has a shot at the playoffs, right? Of course

it does. 81 games left. The Pirates are two games over .500 today. Baseball. America's game.

VANDERBILT 'DORES ARE KINGS

The Southeastern Conference is in the king's row of college football and basketball (mostly Kentucky and Tennessee), and today, baseball.

The Vanderbilt Commodores staked out a spot on SEC king's row last month, winning the college world series.

What's it mean? Vanderbilt U. has a nationally marketable logo to pair with ultra marketable colors, black and gold.

America loves its when underdog wins.

And, it probably means a cable price hike before the SEC Network ever gets to your teevee screen next month.

NBA DRAFT & KENTUCKY

Russ Smith. Tears shed over Russ Smith NBA draft saga is a nonsensical waste of water.

Long term and big picture, only one stumbling block kept the Louisville graduate and All-American from getting the best of it. Not being an NBA first round pick (guaranteed salary), then being selected 47th and traded was worst thing to happen.

If he had gone undrafted and emerged as a free agent Smith's agent could have shopped him into a job where his (free lance) skills would be effective.

UofL fans may not like it, but no NBA GM is interested in paying large dollars to a streaky shoot-first, pass-as-last-resort 160-pound point guard who follows coach instruction some times.

Footnote: With all Rick Pitino's influence in NBA circles one could conclude Da Coach's willingness to help Smith was tepid. Next?

Julius Randle and James Young. How good is this: Seven months at one of the country's elite college programs, then zoom, each heads to teams with illustrious NBA histories?

Randle is a Los Angeles Laker millionaire, Young is same as a Boston Celtic.

SHOW ME THE MONEY DEPT.

Julius Randle felt he should have been chosen higher than seventh. His rookie pay schedule: \$2.4 million first year, \$2.5 million for second and \$2.6 million for a third.

James Young's salary: Year on for player chosen 17th – \$1.3 million, then \$1.4 million each for next two years.

Since 1947 Kentucky has had 112 players into the NBA, according to an athletic department press release.

In 1958 Johnny Cox was picked by the New York Knicks after his junior season (NCAA championship) and then in 1959 by Chicago Zyphers; In 1960 Roger Newman was drafted, but UK records show he played for the Syracuse Nationals in 1961.

UK record keeping can be shaky. For example, first UK player to play professionally was reportedly Bob Cluggish in 1946.

The Lettermen list includes no such name. In 1938-40 Marion Cluggish, Corbin native, played two seasons for Adolph Rupp, then no history of professional basketball career.

First UK player officially drafted by an NBA team? Jack Tingle, 1947, Washington Capitals.

FOOTBALL

Louisville. Promising season ahead for Louisville fans. Using Charlie Strong recruits, coach Bob Petrino's Cardinals are preseason ranked 15th in three of four national polls – Associated Press, Coaches and CBS. UofL is 18th, according to BCS.

A game that could earn national game of the year billing and reset television viewer ratings, No. 1 ranked (in all polls) and defending national champion Florida State comes to Louisville for a Thursday night game, October 30.

Western Kentucky. Preseason ranked 90th among the 128 Division

One teams, says USA Today.

Hilltopper opponents and ranking include: UAB (120), Army (118), Texas-El Paso (114) and Florida Atlantic (97).

Kentucky. Ranked 104th by USA Today, no surprise Kentucky is looking down a cannon barrel again, but there are reasons for optimism.

Five of first six games at home. And yes, No. 4 ranked South Carolina is one.

A trip to Florida September 14 is less daunting than in seasons past. Could be a signature win for coach Mark Stoops program. The Gators, for the first time in recent memory, are not listed in any national Top 25.

An R&R (rest and recovery) open date after Florida before consecutive Saturdays with Vanderbilt, South Carolina and Louisiana Monroe at Commonwealth Stadium.

CALIPARI CHIRP

John Calipari had a tweet during the NBA Draft last month. "I wish ESPN would stop saying we have had 18 draft picks over the last five years when we've had 19. They keep leaving off Enes Kanter."

Calipari is right. He used not-eligible Kanter at practice for seven months, farmed him and fed him until the 2011 NBA Draft in June. The coach wants credit, he should have it.

Logical question: What did the 6-11, 247-pound Turkish professional contribute to University of Kentucky?

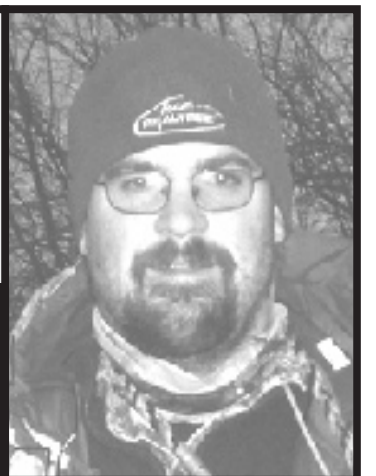
Answer: Tallest civilian clothes horse sitting the bench until draft day.

WORTH REPEATING DEPT.

Was my pleasure to speak at Lions Club luncheon in Henderson last month. Afterwards a gentleman stepped up to shake hands and enlighten me: "You sure have a nerve to come into Cincinnati Reds and St. Louis Cardinals country wearing a shirt for the Pittsburgh Pirates. And so it goes.

Wanderings from the Woods & Water

by Jay Bicknell
WetStoneKennels@Yahoo.Com



Checks And Balances

I got into trapping for a several reasons. One of the reasons is to help with check and balance of predators. Trapping is a way to keep predators in check.

If predators or game animals are not kept in check, then everything is thrown out of balance. If the population of one gets too large, bad things can happen. The population of animals that gets too large can cause mass starvation. A population of predators can decimate the prey population. When deer become over abundant, the car deer collisions increase in the areas of over population.

A few examples of how the check and balance system has got out of whack in nature. The wolf reintroduction out west is a prime example. The wolf reintroduction is not necessarily a bad thing. The problem is when the wolf is left unchecked. The numbers grow out of control and in turn the wolf is wiping out herds of elk, moose, and deer.

The bobwhite quail used to be in every fence row and fallow field in Kentucky. These days it's a treat to flush a wild covey. The loss of habitat coupled with fur prices dropping has led to a steep decline in quail populations. Groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals PETA have contributed to the destruction of the fur industry. Since trapping dropped off, the quail predators populations have risen and quail numbers have dropped.

The check and balance system is very important in the animal world and it is also very important in our government. In the system set up by the U.S. Constitution, the national government is divided into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. These three branches are not independent of one another because the Constitution

set up a system of checks and balances to help ensure that no one branch became too powerful. Each branch has powers that it can use to check and balance the operations and power of the other two branches.

Our system of government has gotten out of balance! If left unchecked bad things will happen. The elected officials have forgotten they serve WE THE PEOPLE. The executive branch of has grown WAY too powerful over the years. The Constitution has become a hindrance to those in power. It is our job WE THE PEOPLE to keep them in check by voting, by calling, by emailing, and by letting our voices be heard.

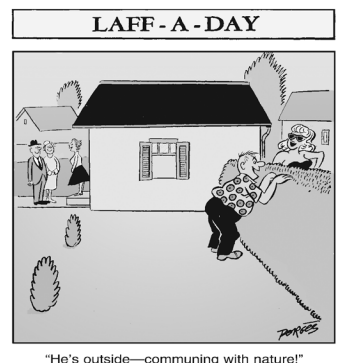
I wish everyone a Happy 4th of July weekend. I urge you over the long weekend to research what our founders intended. I urge you to read the Declaration of Independence. Thank God you're an American and be proud of it!

Until next week, get out and enjoy God's creation! Happy 4th of July!

Birding BITS BY Cindy Brook

Wasp-Free Zone
A sure way to keep wasps off of your hummingbird feeder is to make sure the feeder doesn't have any yellow on it. Wasps are attracted to yellow like hummers are attracted to red. So if you want hummers instead of wasps, keep those feeders red.

E-mail: birdingbits@cfjrr.com
© 2014 King Features Syndicate, Inc.



John Cox

Cox Insurance, Inc.

606-723-4013

407 Richmond Road
Irvine, Kentucky

We Can Help If You Do Not Have Insurance Now!

Even If You Have Other Problems With Your Insurance, Come See Us!

See Us Today! ♦ Free Consulting ♦ Free Quotes

We Have Several New Companies Now With Affordably Rates To Fit Your Needs

Cox Insurance Inc.

606-723-4013

407 Richmond Road Irvine, Kentucky

2014 Estill County Fair 4-H Pet Show Winners

<p>DOGS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cutest Puppy 2. Cutest Small Dog 3. Cutest Large Dog 4. Dog with Longest Tail 5. Dog with Shortest Tail 6. Best Costumed Dog 7. Best Owner/Pet – "Look-a-Like" (Dog) 	<p>Champion</p> <p>Landon Napier Hannah Bell Melea Abney Greg Harrison Amber Arvin Landon Napier Raleigh Jones</p>	<p>Reserve</p> <p>Hunter Bingham Savannah Riddell Amber Arvin Melea Abney Hunter Bingham Lexis Hall Audrey Arvin</p>
<p>CATS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Cutest Kitten 9. Cutest Cat 10. Cat with Longest Tail 12. Best Costumed Cat 13. Best Owner/Pet – "Look-a-Like" (Cat) 	<p>Champion</p> <p>Cheyenne Lamb Lexis Hall Cheyenne Lamb Cheyenne Lamb Lexis Hall</p>	<p>Reserve</p> <p>Cheyenne Lamb Lexis Hall Cheyenne Lamb</p>
<p>OTHER</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Smallest Pet – container 15. Smallest Pet – not in a container 16. Largest Pet – other than dog or cat 17. Best Owner/Pet – "Look-a-Like" (Other) 18. Most Unique Pet 19. Cutest Animal – Must be contained 	<p>Champion</p> <p>Camaron Thomas Samanth Thomas Hannah Bell Analysa Day</p>	<p>Reserve</p> <p>Analysa Day Hannah Bell Samanth Thomas</p>
<p>RABBITS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Cutest Rabbit 22. Pure Breed Does 23. Pure Breed Bucks 24. Mixed Breed Does 25. Mixed Breed Bucks 	<p>Champion</p> <p>Hannah Bell Nathan Marcum Nathan Marcum Nathan Marcum Nathan Marcum</p>	<p>Reserve</p> <p>Analysa Day Analysa Day Hannah Bell</p>