

Bob Watkins' Sports In Kentucky

Louisville to ACC is sports story of new millennium so far



Bob Watkins

University of Louisville's entry to the Atlantic Coast Conference last week is, I think, the most important sports story of the new millennium in Kentuckiana.

Among the high, if least mentioned, positives: Economic impact possibilities regionally; and, the nearest NBA franchise will remain at a distance, Indianapolis.

New league, new television option for fans, new everything. Included, Rick Pitino spin/coach-speak.

"Rick Pitino could charm the gold out of your teeth and not even leave you a toothache," a friend said awhile ago.

If a poll were done ranking most eloquent ball coaches of our time, on any list, Pitino would be first, and second, everyone else tied for third.

He can be Sound Bite Rick for Chris Mathews on MSNBC or how-to-build-a-watch incisive for five minutes on Pardon The Interruption.

In this context, Pitino gave fans a mini-seminar in charm last week. When a Louisville Courier-Journal reporter asked him a may-I-kiss-your-ring question about joining the ACC: "What will it be like to be part of this coaching Mount Rushmore, Mike Krzyzewski, Roy Williams and Jim Boheim?" Pitino apparently resisted gagging and a Pontiff-on-high response too.

"... the programs are much bigger than the coaches," he said. "North Carolina, Syracuse, Duke and Louisville stand far above the coaches."

Above the coaches. Nicely correct.

Then, response to an-

other question put him and UofL in stark contrast with our state's other basketball Titan down 1-64.

Q. (What) other benefits' going to the ACC?

Pitino waxed collegial, slipped in a genuflect to UofL president Dr. James Ramsey whose new mission is finding ways to compete with Academia's big dogs.

"We're also going to take off academically," he said. "We're looking to really improve our image academically. So, instead of (being) middle of the road we become an elite university academically ..."

Compete with Wake Forest, Duke and Boston College, "because they're all premier programs."

Deciding if Pitino's remarks are genuine or coach-speak baloney, is your option. That he used his bully pulpit to mention academic growth, be an academic rival for Boston College and the rest, is, well, charming.

LOUISVILLE LEAGUE HISTORY

Louisville's membership in the Atlantic Coast Conference is one of the most remarkable journeys in college conference history.

Once upon a time Coach Peck Hickman's Louisville's basketball team played Western Kentucky for the Ohio Valley Conference championship. Was 55 years ago. The Hilltoppers won.

Home and home regulars on UofL's schedule in those days: Kentucky Wesleyan, Morehead, Murray, Eastern and Western Kentucky (and no UK). Football program was weak and women's basketball non-existent.

√ 1963-1974, Louisville belonged to the Missouri Valley Conference.

√ 1975-2005, Metro Conference and Conference USA

√ 2005-2012, Big East.

√ 2013 American Athletic.

Big winners and big losers with Louisville's league change?

Winner: Women's basketball, Cardinal football and baseball.

Winner: ACC member schools. UofL IS a hot ticket.

Winner: Landed-on-his-feet again, Bob Petrino.

Loser: Charlie Strong.

Winner-in-waiting: If academic rivalries with Duke, Boston College are established, biggest winners, students.

SALESMANSHIP?

College basketball aficionados enduring the Summertime Slows needed something to stir the heavy air and a television sports network obliged.

A list of the game's top 50 coaches. Criteria? Apparently one: Salesmanship?

The sports television network tried to sell Florida's Billy Donovan at number one. Nada.

The network killed its credibility straight out of the box by listing anybody not named Mike Krzyzewski.

Using any and all measures, the best coach in college hoops is one with most wins, most Olympic gold medals (2), NCAA titles (4), place in the Hall of Fame, and on Duke's campus the number one rated recruiting class this year, adding to a steady flow of blue chip student-athletes over more than two decades who bought into Coach K's salesmanship.

But hey, it's summertime. The network got what it wanted from its coach-rank exercise. Buzz.

DIS 'N DATA

√ Watch this: The NCAA reopened an investigation on alleged rules violations (academic fraud) at University of North Carolina. UNC officials "want to sit down and talk" with (whistle blower?) Rashad McCants.

The Garden Bug Sage is an herb that can be used as a garden feature, as a fragrance, in cooking and also medicinally. It is used for digestive problems such as stomach pain, bloating and heartburn, and for reducing perspiration and saliva. It is also used as a treatment for depression, memory loss, and Alzheimer's disease. It can be applied directly to the skin for swelling and to relieve pain.

Source: www.webmd.com - Brenda Weaver

The case has parallels to scandals at Kentucky, mid-1980s.

√ Decisions. Madison Southern prize running back Damian Harris, 5-10, 205-pound senior, will choose a college soon - Alabama, Oregon, Michigan, Ohio State, Kentucky, Florida, Florida State or Notre Dame.

√ Money Dept. Ex-Kentucky student-athletes Jodie Meeks signed with the Detroit Pistons, \$19.1 million for three years; Patrick Patterson to the Toronto Raptors, \$18 million for three years.

√ Just wondering Dept. LeBron James will go back to Cleveland Cavaliers, ESPN predicts. Wonder if John Calipari thinks how he could've gotten his man, \$70 million and a C-135 rental to airlift both their egos to Cleveland.

WORTH REPEATING DEPT.

Dunk contests. Most all-star game watchers believe they're a waste of time and much ado about nothing. The following fan view says it all:

"This sort of gaga nonsense ranges between disgust and 'how stupid is this?' A dunk shot. Two points. Not three, but TWO points.

"Entertainment? It's a sham, a scam, a joke, an example of dumbing down America by media-types probably too short, too fat and too easily impressed - gone bonkers when a big ole kid in short pants shows off his 'ME game' in a team sport with a 3-6-0 or a pogo-stick, or a high flyer, and now a jaw-dropper between the legs dunk! So what? Still TWO points." And so it goes.

Family Tradition Continues as A New Record is Set at the 4th of July Tournament

See top finishers in photo at right on Page 15

Phillip Webb, a 2014 Estill County High School graduate, set a new record Sunday by winning the Championship Flight at the Estill County Golf Club 4th of July Invitational Tournament.

At 18 years of age, Phillip became the youngest player in the Club's history to win this tournament.

Along with setting a record, Phillip is also continuing a family tradition. He has kept the title in his family following his brother Scott's back-to-back championships.

Scott held the title for 2011 and 2012. Due to rain, no tournament was held in 2013.

Two other Estill Countians, Aaron Morrison and Kelby Robinson, tied for 2nd place in the Championship Flight. Marty Anderson of Nicholasville finished in 3rd place.

With the sun shining and a

cool breeze blowing, teams began tee-off at 8:00 a.m. on Friday with 88 entrants from across Kentucky and several other states as well. The competition was stiff in all flights with several sudden death holes played to determine the winners in the 1st - 4th flights of match play.

The championship flight was especially tough with several former winners playing in the tournament. A large crowd gathered to watch the last holes with anticipation of the flight's medal play winner.

After being medalist on Day 1 of the tournament finishing 5 under par, Phillip maintained his composure with a smile on his face to complete the 3-day event 10 under par. After the win, Scott Webb said, "I couldn't be happier. If I had to lose, I'm glad it was to Phillip."

Other tournament results are as follows:

1st Flight:	2nd Flight:
1st: Butch Coleman, Irvine	1st: B. J. Kirby, Irvine
2nd: Rick Floyd, Irvine	2nd: Brad King, Berea
3rd: Jordan Grayson, Maysville	3rd: Mark Patrick, Irvine
1st Flight Consolation	2nd Flight Consolation
1st: Buster Begley, Clay City	1st: Benton Kirby, Irvine
2nd: Gary Meadows, Stanton	2nd: Dickie Arthur, Irvine
3rd Flight:	4th Flight:
1st: J.R. Fields, Owensville	1st: Justin Dixon, Irvine
2nd: Bill Jones, Irvine	2nd: Randy McMillen,
3rd: John Henry, Richmond	3rd: Robert Stepp, Irvine
3rd Flight Consolation	4th Flight Consolation
1st: Kenneth Henry, Winchester	1st: Mickey Toll, Chesapeake, VA
2nd: Happy Osborne, Owensboro	2nd: Bill Walters, Irvine

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