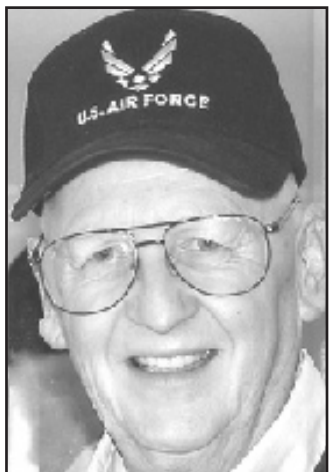


Bob Watkins' Sports In Kentucky

To last of the only Fabulous Five, fare-the-well, Wah Wah Jones, and thank you



Bob Watkins

NOTE: This is the July 30th column (last week's) for Bob Watkins. The original column was lost, possible due to internet and other outages, and did not reach us in time for publication. The August 6th column is included this week on Page 14.

Last of the first and only Fabulous Five, Wallace Clayton 'Wah Wah' Jones left us this week. He was 88.

Nicknamed Wah Wah by his sister Jackie when she was just learning to talk and couldn't pronounce his name, stuck.

An All-American for rawhide tough legends Bear Bryant and Adolph Rupp at Kentucky, Wah Wah was their equal at thriving on toughness.

He had an incredibly full life in and around athletics. High school then college stardom including an Olympics gold medal, the Harlan native was once sheriff of Fayette County and remained a popular fixture around UK athletics all the way to introduction at the 2013-14 basketball season.

A photograph of Jones taken in 1948 represented what I believed a genuine college athlete ought look. At 6-feet-4, heavy muscled shoulders and legs, fiercely competitive, tough, with Clark Kent-like shock of black hair and no tattoos. A twin for Jim Thorpe only larger.

Adolph Rupp was asked frequently about his "favor-

ite player of all time" and Der Baron never said so, but some believe Wah Wah was his man.

In 2011 a newspaper photograph imaged UK All-American Anthony Davis alongside a bent-by-age, Wah Wah Jones. It left me to wonder: Does young Anthony Davis realize he is in the presence of greatness? Wah Wah Jones.

MARK STOOPS

Who could cast Kentucky's still-in-the-honey-moon-glow football coach Mark Stoops as villain? Maybe someone who fails to see John Boehner as a windmill chaser. Or, a grumpy Louisville fan.

In Shelbyville last week, still contrite, Bobby Petrino was at the ready but Stoops was a no-show at the Governor's Cup fete. Cardinal fans called a snub, a UofL house writer said it was UK arrogance. And, Stoops who said he had excused himself weeks ago, offered an apology to the offended. What it was, was much ado about nothing. An arranged media event turned into war stories-and-golf, and a gaggle of reporters left to hit a deadline with something, anything. Stoops as no-show beat nothing. Upside fro Governor's Cup party? Petrino got a stage to himself and Stoops got a larger stage a day later IN Louisville.

POLSON BOOK?

Jarrold Polson will write a book about University of Kentucky basketball. Maybe.

Vantage point and four years inside the self anointed Gold Standard of college hoops as qualifiers, makes this heady stuff. Rare opportunity.

Polson is probably too young, too close, and still too warmed by the golden glow of two Final Fours, to do much more than offer a clutch of anecdotes, name drops and "thank you, thank you's!" to offer anything earth shaking. But

back story possibilities are, to understate the case, intriguing.

- Given his effectiveness over Ryan Harrow, why Polson wasn't given a sustained chance to be the point guard 2012-13?
- How and why Kyle Wiltjer transferred to Gonzaga?

- Why a coach can sweet talk a recruit, then have no sway with clueless kids determined to leave UK too soon (Doron Lamb, Marquis Teague, James Young)?

More likely, a Polson book would be to make a few dollars, sign a few more autographs, keep whatever limelight is left a bit longer and have brag rights to a campus bookstore shelf spot filed alphabetically with Hatton and Chandler, Mills, Farmer, Sheppard, Krebs and others.

If you were fresh from four years inside a favorite basketball program, had notes filed away, and wanted to embark on a project, how would you proceed?

Consider these preliminaries.

- First, detachment. Accepting this life experience, as unique, unexpected as it was, is history, could you pen a Tell All at risk of being shunned?
- To learn **HOW** to write about the inside. *A Season On the Brink* by John Feinstein, would be required reading.
- If the goal was higher than say, a shelf spot at the campus bookstore, alphabetically with tomes by Mills, Farmer, Hatton and Chandler, Krebs and other ex-players and officials, would you be inclined to inform, and more, fascinate freshly? After all, books written about UK basketball placed end to end, might stretch from wherever you are all the way to Fredonia in Caldwell County.
- Then, when the writing starts, time is critical. time to work, time to avoid Sports Center, time to

purchase a good Thesaurus and use it, and time to resolve yourself to never use the word great. Ever.

- Ready to begin? We will see if Jarrod Polson is.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY CANDIDATE

Most fascinating autobiography in Kentucky would be life of man who celebrated his 71st birthday this month.

Clem Haskins.

Fifth of 11 children, he broke the color line in Campbellsville in 1961, became first black and all-stater at Taylor County High School; was, along with Dwight Smith of Princeton, first black player at Western Kentucky where Clem-The-Gem became an All-American. Played nine years in the NBA, returned to coach at WKU, then 13 years at Minnesota where he endured a profound fall from grace.

HALL OF FAME IMAGES

Baseball added five plaques to its hallowed halls last week. Favorites of mine, Atlanta Brave pitchers Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine.

√ Maddux. His money pitch, always low in the zone, headed toward a batter's knees ... turned left (or right) at the last instant, painted the corner of strike zone, strike three! Consistently.

√ Tom Glavine. Dr. Clever, I called him. Much as umpires in the 1950s let Ted Williams determine what a strike zone was, by his swing or not, NL umpires let Glavine decide where the outside corner was. Consistently.

Remarkably, Maddux and Glavine got to the Hall of Fame on guile, control and smarts, not miles-per-hour.

And so it goes. You can reach Bob Watkins at sprtsinky@aol.

Wanderings from the Woods & Water

by Jay Bicknell
WetStoneKennels@yahoo.com



4th Place Gobble

On Saturday, Kenneth Plowman and I traveled to Columbia, Kentucky, for an outdoor expo. We went to the expo to help at the Brothers In Arms game calls booth. I was competing in the KY Open Gobbling Competition with my Brothers In Arms coyote howler. Yep the howler makes a great gobble call.

It wasn't too long after I arrived at the expo that they called all competitors to the competition area. Back many moons ago, back in my football days, before every game I would start dry heaving. As I set waiting my turn to call that pre-football game feeling hit me like a ton of bricks. I had butterflies the size of elephants! My thoughts turned away from calling and more to being sure I didn't lose my breakfast on stage.

I got to watch a lot of great turkey calling competitors compete before the gobbling competition. These guys could work a turkey call. I even saw some kids that could call as good as any adult in the completion. As I watched all the competitors, my nerves started easing and I was ready compete.

The minute the gobbling completion started all the butterflies flew back to my stomach. I was like a soup sandwich all of a sudden. I saw the first caller go, and did he put on a show! I thought, uh oh, I am in trouble. This was

my first time at a competition and I realized having a game plan and routine was a must! A gobbling competition is not all about gobbling!

So, I quickly put a plan together by watching the other competitors. They called me up to call. I walked around the stage and tried to gobble like an old gobbler. When I come off the stage I figured my chances of placing were slim to none, and slim left town!

When it all ended and they tallied up the scores they asked competitor 4 and 6 to come forward. I was competitor 6 and wondered what they wanted. Turns out, I tied with competitor 4 and was going to a call off. Yep, butterflies flew back again. The call off happened so quick that I forgot about a game plan and just started gobbling.

After the call off, they told the winners. The call off was for 3rd place, and, well, I got 4th. No money or a trophy for me. I did find out the guy I tied with got 2nd last year in the Grand Nationals. So I didn't feel too bad with a 4th place finish.

I didn't win, but I sure had fun. I now have a need to win calling competitions. I plan on entering a couple more gobbling competitions this year and maybe try a duck calling competition. I look forward to some more big butterflies!

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

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