

Bob Watkins' Sports In Kentucky

Kentucky's All-New-People getting sweet reviews; For whom bell tolls: Tar Heels Inc.



Bob Watkins

Opinions that are well rooted should grow and change like a healthy tree.

— Irving Batcheller on opinions

Kentucky acquitted itself well against against Mississippi State last week. By Old-Days standards, a two-touchdown loss to No. 1 in America would be a win of sorts. Not anymore.

Mississippi State demonstrated what Mark Stoops knows full well, there is much to do before Kentucky gets into conversation about SEC championship.

Meanwhile, Big Blue fans ought be pleased with how perception is becoming reality. Television analysts Jesse Palmer (SEC Network) and Gary Danielson (CBS) have joined Andre Ware singing praises.

Palmer is a well spoken communicator with SEC combat experience (Florida). Ware owns a Heisman, and Danielson is as canny and well seasoned an analyst as there is in football. Their opinions matter.

Covering Kentucky each dutifully described shortcomings and gaffes, but all three mouthed high praise for the All-New-People

Wildcats and what Stoops and staff are doing. Their sunny side commentary is gold. Raises Kentucky's recruiting profile to uncommon heights even if still below the waterline set at Alabama, Georgia and LSU.

Early playing time remains the lure at Kentucky, but sweet talk from Palmer, Ware, Danielson and others is more valuable than the most clever and flattering tweets from coaches.

Persuading a prospect to visit campus is central to success, and Commonwealth Stadium is more frequently a popular visit for high caliber high school prospect. Hard evidence? See the roster, number of sophomores and freshmen, and increasing number of newcomers afforded red shirts.

So, having survived LSU and competed evenly with Mississippi State, Kentucky's All-New-People Wildcats travel to Missouri with a fair chance. And, a fair chance to win one or more of their final four games.

BELL TOLLS FOR TAR HEELS

Paper classes for student-athletes at North Carolina? From former federal prosecutor Kenneth Wainstein, just a new acronym for what we called 18 years ago, Basket Weaving 101.

But Wainstein dropped a bomb on Chapel Hill last week moving Kentucky fans to chortle and self-righteous media types to jump on the expose' bandwagon, create a drum beat demand for public humiliation then a collective lynching.

Wainstein's report, I think, assures us these preliminaries:

√ A UNC investigation to discredit the messenger. Leak to media herd will send reporters scurrying to find the former federal prosecutor's allegiances. He must be a closet Duke fan, or a Kentucky loyalist. In fact, Wainstein is a University of Virginia and UC Berkeley graduate.

√ Get a UNC spinner onto John Stewart's Daily Show.

√ UNC lieutenants working for ball coaches Dean Smith-to-Roy Williams are worthy of a back-hand congratulation. They kept an academic fraud going all way back to time when a new word in our lexicon was Taliban.

√ Makes squeaky-clean North Carolina a candidate for a Sports Illustrated cover. Shame the Sequel.

√ The proportions and fall-out from this scandal could make NCAA chiefs angry enough at UNC-Chapel Hill to slap the death penalty on UNC-Charlotte. For now, for North Carolina's proud athletics administration, the bell tolls for three. Tar Heels Inc. is forced to lawyer up, try and subvert pious (Williams) being dragged out of denial into the hot lights of national media.

• Three years ago University researcher Mary Willingham was fired as a whistle blower, then discredited as a plagiarist.

• Ex-player, Rashad McCants who paper classed his way to success, spoke up on academic fraud, was roundly skewed for it, but urged former teammates to "just show your transcripts." Recently, McCants' picture was taken down from a wall in the school's media room.

Meanwhile, the intrigue tickens. As this relates to University of Kentucky's much documented dirty laundry history, I will be among those interested to see how the NCAA handles Carolina coaches, in particular Roy Williams.

Will the NCAA give him the Kelvin Sampson-at-Indiana treatment: Crucifixion? Or, will it permit the deniability stratagem? The one given John Calipari before he high-tailed away from UMass then Memphis? One that allows the ball coach a pass: "I didn't know anything, therefore I'm not responsible."

Let us hope the NCAA concludes its investigation, renders a judgement, then outlasts Carolina's (four corners?) appeals, then applies justice at least 24 hours before the Big Five announces itself divorced from the NCAA altogether, letting Carolina and the rest to get back to business as usual.

PARTING SHOT

Ex-Kentucky guard Daron Lamb was waived by the NBA Dallas Mavericks last Saturday. In five pre-season games he averaged 9.6 minutes playing time and 3.4 points.

A member of UK's 2012 national championship team, Lamb, with his coach's blessing, left for the NBA draft after his sophomore season. Now a free agent, Lamb's birthday is Thursday. What next for a 23-year-old with no college degree and possibly no professional basketball options?

And so it goes
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Maudie's Naughties



Call From Work

Leroy comes home from work one day and is met at the door by his wife who has just gotten a call from Leroy's boss. It seems that Leroy has been having problems understanding differences between men and women at work.

So his wife takes him upstairs to their bedroom and closes the door. First, she says, "Leroy, I want you to take off my blouse." So, he unbuttons her blouse and takes it off.

"Okay, now, take off my skirt . . ."

And he takes off her skirt.

"Now, take off my bra . . ."

Which he does.

"Now, Leroy, take off my panties . . ."

When Leroy finishes removing those, she says, "Leroy, please don't wear any of my clothes to work anymore!"

Paying Respects

A golfer and his buddies are playing a big round of golf for \$200. At the eighteenth green, the golfer has a ten-foot putt to win the round and the \$200. As he is lining up his putt, a funeral procession starts to pass by. The golfer sets down his putter, takes off his hat, places it over his chests and begins to wait for the funeral procession to pass. Afterwards, he returns and sinks the winning putt.

"That was one of the most touching things I have ever seen," says one of his buddies. "Stopping play, possibly losing your concentration, to pay your respects."

"Well," the golfer says. "We were married for 25 years."

Vacuum Cleaner Salesman

The farmer's wife answers a knock on the door one day, only to be confronted by a young vacuum cleaner salesman.

"Good morning," says the young man. "If I could take a couple minutes of your time, I would like to demonstrate the very latest in high-powered vacuum cleaners."

"I haven't got any money," says the farmer's wife, "And I couldn't use one of those anyway." She tries to close the door, but quick as a flash, the young man wedges his foot in the door and pushes it wide open.

"Don't be too hasty!" he says. "Not until you have at least seen my demonstration." And with that, he empties a bucket of dried cow dung all over her hallway carpet. "If this vacuum cleaner does not remove all traces of this from your carpet, Ma'm, I will personally eat the remainder."

"Well," she says, "Let me get you a spoon and a glass of water, because we ain't got electricity out here."

Special Pig

Farmer Jones got out of his car and while heading for his friend's door, notices a pig with a wooden leg. His curiosity roused, he asks, "Fred, how'd that pig get him a wooden leg?"

"Well, that's a mighty special pig! A while back we had a fire one night. That pig pushes open the door and wakes us up. We all got out okay and were able to save the house, too."

"And the pig got his leg burned off in the fire?"

"No," says Farmer Fred. "He got out okay, too!"

"Well, how did he get the wooden leg?"

"That's a special pig," says Farmer Fred. "When you have a special pig like that, you don't want to eat him all at once!"

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Paid for by Jim Thacker