

Bob Watkins' Sports In Kentucky

For UK and Western it's good to be king; Louie Dampier still The Right Stuff



Bob Watkins

It's good to be king, if just for a while. To be there in velvet, yeah, to give 'em a smile.

— Tom Petty, Wildflowers

Kentucky football is king this week.

King of what?
√ Land where folks root for underdogs.

√ Province for those who disdain the term 'Basketball School.'

√ Hearts of Big Blue fans who view a win at South Carolina as more than L-turned-W on their schedules and more a path open to SEC East sunny place alongside Georgia.

√ And, residents who own tickets to the game at Commonwealth Stadium this week that (brace yourself) might attract ticket scalpers.

Yes, it's good to be king.

Beating the handicappers last week, Mark Stoops' crew delivered a "down goes Frazier!" blow to the Ol' Ball Coach, shook up the East and can be a signature win two Saturdays in, and already earned UK eight votes in the Associated Press poll.

Says here, how the 26-22 victory was accomplished, pushed Big Blue cheers a decibel or two higher than

the hot air rising from one mouth at the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame six states away.

2015. Kentucky football is "here in velvet to give 'em a smile." because, beyond the tweets and praises for the Wildcats' win last week, they give rise to a new and urgent clamor across our state. In two words — *Opportunity's knocks.*

Bang on Big Blue's door is loud enough to expand tailgate parties, make the Cat Walk into a can't-miss event, a stadium to standing-room-only, and all things basketball put in deep shade for a news cycle.

Rally cry this week: It's good to be king, if just for a while.

Call to arms: "Anybody got tickets for the Florida game?"

For the record from South Carolina game ...

• Eleven. Autumns since Kentucky won an SEC opener away from Lexington (Arkansas).

• Sixteen. Autumns since Kentucky won a game in Columbia, South Carolina.

• 8-and-0. Record in Mark Stoops three year tenure when his team led at halftime. (Reference at half-time with Florida this week)

• Patrick Towles completed 21 of 29 passes for 192 yards and grew some.

• He-Who-Scores-Last Dept. Wildcats offense scored zero after halftime while South Carolina put four scores on the board. In the end, Denzil Ware's 98-yard run for two points at 8:09 in the fourth, sealed Kentucky's win.

• Denzil Ware's two-point conversion is first since Eric Kelly returned a PAT at LSU in 1998. UK won 39-36.

• A football analyst in Columbia wrote: "The Gamecocks entered this game with little to no motivation to even show up, despite the fact it was on (its) home turf in (a) home opener. For the most part, coaching is to blame for the lack of effort. However, Steve Spurrier and his staff do deserve major kudos for the second-half response, which was timely and put the Gamecocks in a position to earn the win."

Comment: No motivation to 'even show up.' Really? 82,178 fans did and a considerable number of those (wearing blue) went home happy.

WESTERN KENTUCKY

Hilltopper football's season opening salvo(s) makes WKU's start every ounce as impressive as Kentucky's. Road win against an SEC foe, a 41-38 against C-USA title contender Louisiana Tech and now an Opportunity Knocks game at Big Ten Indiana (2-0).

Running back Leon Allen lost for the season means more pressure is concentrated on Topper quarterback Brandon Doughty. But the kid who has shown he can handle it, has opportunity to show why he should be a Heisman Trophy candidate.

The Hoosiers are favored by three meaning pundits rate this a toss-up. Win-wise, recruiting-wise and entertainment-wise this could be a dream game for those who like lots of scoring.

LOUIE DAMPIER

Shangri-La is described as a mystical even mythical place. It seemed so for Louie Dampier last week. At the Naismith College Basketball Hall of Fame in-

ductions, Dampier seemed bedazzled, not convinced he belonged, all the way to the podium.

His time in the bright lights was as endearing as all those shots at Kentucky that should have been 3s. And, a hug with Dan Issel at the end of Dampier's speech was touching too.

By time Louie got to thank yous to family and friends, he appeared to find his voice. Then he showed why, when any poll taken in Kentucky asks for most popular UK players, his name is always included. It's been 48 years.

Dampier said his first basketball goal was to make the freshmen team at Southport High, then make the varsity, maybe even play college ball. Then he shared a bit of advice from his high school coach. "to play college ball, you've got to move your shot (range) out to 20 feet." We know the rest of that story.

Louie Dampier. I've had a few heroes along the way, all but a very few eluded Shana Alexander's classic, "Keep your heroes at a distance lest you see their blemish and be disappointed."

Most all have been disappointments, but not the kid who wore 10 at Kentucky.

Louie Dampier re-affirmed at the Naismith Hall of Fame last Friday, his enduring popular. He is the sort of Kentuckian (born Hoosier) we admire most because he is The Right Stuff. Genuine, humble, credits others, is dignified and says things like, "I'm just happy to be in same place with these guys."

And so it goes. You can reach me at <bob.Watkins24@aol.com

Living Archaeology Weekend at Gladie

The annual Living Archaeology Weekend will once again celebrate Kentucky's historic and prehistoric heritage.

Artisans and craftspeople from across the country will gather at the Gladie Visitor Center in the Red River Gorge to demonstrate specialized skills from past cultures.

Some of the featured activities will include the making of stone tools, hide tanning, spear throwing, pottery and basketry. The Gladie Cabin will also be open for self-guided tours.

"This two-day event attracts people of all ages. It is Kentucky's longest-running archaeology event conducted for the public," said Wayna Adams, Forest Archaeologist with the Daniel Boone National Forest.

"The demonstrations are staged to provide students and visitors with a glimpse into our cultural past."

On Friday, Sept. 18 the event is for pre-registered

school groups only, primarily targeting fifth grade curriculum.

On Saturday, Sept. 19 the event is open to the general public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visitors can listen to live Bluegrass music while sampling a cup of soup beans with freshly baked cornbread. Madison County farmer and author Bill Best will be discussing his cultivation of heirloom beans. Admission is free.



Seed Tips

1. Freeze seed for 24 hours to kill bugs, moths and other creepy-crawly things and their eggs.
2. Try safflower seed if you don't want nuisance birds like grackles, or pesky squirrels.
3. Use hulled sunflower chips to avoid messy hulls under your feeder.

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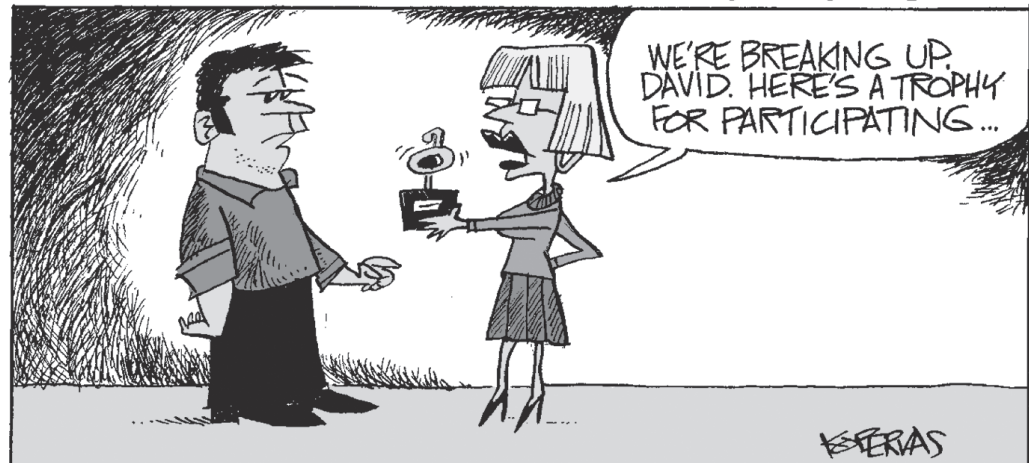
TODAY'S WORD

Out on a Limb

LOVE IN THE AGE OF ENTITLEMENT

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by Gary Kopervas



WE'RE BREAKING UP, DAVID. HERE'S A TROPHY FOR PARTICIPATING...

KOPERVAS

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