

Lin Dunn retiring from coaching after 44 years



by Larry Vaught

After spending 44 years coaching basketball at every level, Lin Dunn retired in the summer of 2014 to become a full-time consultant for different college basketball teams.

It was a life she enjoyed. She set her own hours, picked where she wanted to work -- or not work.

"It was a great situation but I was still connected to the game, too," she said.

Last season Kentucky women's coach Matthew Mitchell reached out to her for help. She came to Lexington without even negotiating a fee like she normally does because she had known Mitchell since he was a graduate assistant at Tennessee under Pat Summitt, Dunn's long-time friend.

"When I came on campus I immediately got invested back with helping him. I liked the people here, really liked the players and liked what he was trying to do. I really enjoyed it but didn't think about doing it again this year," Dunn laughed and said.

But yet she's now a full-time assistant coach after not being able to say no to Mitchell, who lost his entire coaching staff when last season ended.

"The more I thought about what a great way for me to find out what it is really like now, the more I liked Matthew's offer. It has been 20 years since I have been on a college campus. The recruiting, coaching, schedule. Just get re-educated. And it's hard for me to say no to Matthew when he says I can help him and his program and I thought, 'Well maybe I can,'" she said.

"I believe in Matthew. I trust in Matthew. I always have. He's a good man. He's a good father. He's a great coach. I didn't have any reservations about working with him or helping him. Then the more I thought about it, the more I thought I would do it.

"We had to talk about how it would be. But once I made up my mind to do it, I kind of got excited. Back with younger student-athletes ... in the pros, when you are working with 30- to 35-year-old athletes, you have a different impact on them than you do with 18, 19, 20 year olds. I enjoyed working with the younger

group again."

That not only includes the players but also assistant coaches Kyra Elzy and Nija Butts, who both played for Summitt and had worked with Mitchell at UK before rejoining his staff.

"I have tremendous respect because they have Tennessee ties. We all in some way are connected to Pat Summitt," Dunn said. "She and I were sorority sisters. We both went to UT-Martin. There was a connection there that was interesting.

"I knew I would look forward not only to working for Matthew, but working with Kyra and Nija. It just looked like a really good situation for me, so I did it. I haven't regretted a minute of it. Pat always thought of Matthew as a son. She always took care of him and checked on him. She would have patted me on back for helping him through adversity if she was still with us."

Kentucky went 25-8 last year, including 10-6 in Southeastern Conference play, and won two NCAA Tournament games before the offseason turnover of coaches and players began.

"I never saw turmoil, just turnover. When all three of your assistants are gone and some of your players transfer, there has been turnover. But at the same time you still won 25 games and still maximized a lot of potential you have," Dunn said. "Matthew is consistently successful year after year. In some ways he probably thought that I could help bring some stability with the staff and getting players stabilized and then figure out how to be champions.

"That is what I love about this place. I am so impressed with what John Calipari has done over there in men's basketball. Why can't we do it in women's basketball? Let's win championships. Let's get great people in here and figure out a way to win championships. I have been involved in the Olympics, the World Championships. I have won the WNBA championship. I have been to the NCAA Women's Final Four. But I don't have a NCAA championship. I wouldn't mind helping Matthew get one."

So did Mitchell get a bad knock for all that happened after the season ended?

"Any time you have the turnover he's had over the last few seasons, people are going to wonder what is going on and what happened. I don't think it has helped him to have turnover. I think everybody is looking for stability. I am sure there were questions," Dunn said.

"But I loved that Matthew stepped up and took responsibility. I don't know of very many coaches in any sport that would hold a 45-minute press conference like he did and entertain any question you had about the turnover

or program. This is my program. Let's talk about it. I hold myself accountable. We have to get things back on track. I thought what he did was fantastic and and that is what needed to be done.

"Matthew has great leadership skills and tremendous core values. I already feel like the ship or the train or whatever, we are on the right track to be successful not only this year but for the future. You are not only building for now but you are building for the future and I am enjoying helping him. I feel like I am a good resource for him because of the experience I have. I have coached for 44 years. I can help him with offense. I can help him with defense. I can help him with the players. I am available to help any way I can."

Kentuckian J.B. Holmes hopes he can help the U.S. win the Ryder Cup just like he did in 2008 at Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville.

"We are really excited. It should be a lot of fun. All the people on the team are a lot of fun. It will be a great dynamic week," said Erica Holmes, J.B. Holmes' wife. "We were hoping he would get picked, but it was still definitely a great surprise. We are very happy and grateful for the opportunity to go out there to win back the Ryder Cup."

Holmes, a Taylor County native, was a three-time All-American at Kentucky and is in the UK Athletics Hall of Fame. He was fourth at the Masters and third at the British Open this year.

The Ryder Cup will be Sept. 30-Oct. 2 at Hazeltine

National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn. Team captain Davis Love III used one of his four picks on Holmes.

"I think he will probably appreciate it even more this time since he is a little bit older," his wife said. "It's a whole different experience. He loves being with the guys on the team. It's nice because normally you don't get to spend that much time with the golf group. The Ryder Cup team dynamic creates a whole atmosphere you do not get on the tour. You are not trying to beat each other. You are trying to beat another team.

"On the tour, we will go out on occasion with other players and their wives, but you really don't have a whole bunch of time to be around one another and pull for each other's husbands as hard as we will that week. We get to walk the golf course together and cheer for 12 players with our whole heart and soul."

She's expecting Kentuckians to again be around to support her husband just as they did in 2008.

"The support he gets from Kentucky is so important to him," Erica said. "The fans are what makes the Ryder Cup what it is. Being from Kentucky, he loves to know all the Kentuckians are rooting for him and there's no doubt there will be Kentuckians at the Ryder Cup again."

Former UK basketball standout Charles Hurt passed away last week at age 55 after a long battle with leukemia. He was a high school Parade All-American at Shelby County and led Shelby to a state title.

The 6-6 Hurt played in 124 games at UK from 1979-83. He scored 786 points, grabbed 496 rebounds, gave out 104 assists and made 74 steals. He was a 59.3 percent career shooter and seldom took bad shots.

"I remember when I got to Kentucky as a freshman the way that both Charles Hurt and Derrick Hord just threw me around in practice," former UK All-American Kenny Walker said. "Charles was so strong. He could just throw me anywhere he wanted.

"But what a great guy he was. Anything I needed to know, he told me and would help me. He was the nicest guy you could want to be around and just a great teammate."

Hurt enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1987 and became a career military man. He lived in Germany, Kuwait and Korea during his tour and became an information systems chief.

Mike Korb was a sergeant at Fort Bragg, N.C., when he got a call to pick up a new paratrooper. When he went, it was Hurt.

"I walked him out of the orderly room and stopped and said, 'Your Charles Hurt of the Wildcats.' He was built like Hulk. Super guy who was a true airborne soldier. Charles was not just a great basketball player or a great soldier, he was a great man who was brought up the right way," Korb said. "Very polite and always a smile on his face. God Bless him, his family and his memory as a gentle giant who was also a warrior through and through."

Mark Stoops said he was

taking over the Kentucky defense last week and almost everyone thought it could not hurt. Yet with Stoops in charge, UK still gave up 42 points and 500 total yards to New Mexico State in a 62-42 win.

Kentucky hosts South Carolina Saturday night -- a game many UK fans want to believe is winnable. But is it?

Kentucky ranks 122nd out of 128 teams in total defense (528 yards per game). The only worse defenses are Texas Tech, Arkansas State, Bowling Green, Hawaii, Texas State and Rice.

It gets worse. Kentucky is 127th in third-down defense, 116th in run defense, 112th in pass defense and 92nd in sacks. The Cats are also 122nd in scoring defense. Kentucky is also 115th in turnover margin and 102nd in sacks allowed.

Yet linebacker Courtney Love says the defense is getting better. When I told him how could I explain that to fans who looked at the numbers, he gave me this answer for you after last week's win.

"We are getting better because you see guys making plays. You see guys getting to the ball. You see guys willing to fight the second half. It kind of looked like Southern Miss a little bit when they scored right before the half and they got momentum," Love said. "We came out and got a stop and then another stop. Guys were just finishing and getting to the ball. You can see guys getting better and we will continue to do that. We just have to be more consistent. That's all I can tell fans."



ESTILL COUNTY COMMUNITY CHORUS:

ESTILL COUNTY – WE ARE INVITING YOU TO COME SING WITH US!!!

CALLING ALL SINGERS in ESTILL COUNTY!!!!!!

The Estill County Community Chorus will be starting back up on

Thursday evening, September 29, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

We have accepted and named a new Chorus Director. Her name is **Rose D. Daniels, Ph. D.** We are so honored and excited to have her extend her services, and long list of credentials (Ph. D in Choral Music Education, Master of Arts in Teaching Degree in Music and a Bachelor of Music Education,) to direct our Community Chorus, for this Christmas Concert!!! We are now officially into the Fall Season, so it's that time again to start preparing for Christmas music (our favorite time of the year, with all its fun music and carols.) Also, and **MOSTLY**, we just enjoy seeing each other again to sing and fellowship, and prepare for another wonderful and challenging Concert. It stretches us to learn more, do more – our minds and voices!

We are encouraging **ALL SINGERS - ALL AGES – Middle School, High School and Up, Past Members, Present Members and NEW MEMBERS** to join us!!!!

We welcome you to come and be a part, no matter whether you are a soprano, alto, tenor or bass. **NO AUDITIONS! Just bring your VOICES!!!**

Come and give us a try! We have **FUN** singing familiar songs and learning new songs. If you love to sing, that's all you need, **SO** give us a little of your time, and inspire the Community with your vocal talent. You don't have to have any formal training. We do practice though, to make our Community proud of us, when we perform at our Concerts. The Chorus is a form of the Estill Arts in Irvine, to represent our Community and the Arts.

COME OUT TO WELCOME ROSE DANIELS –

ESTILL COUNTY COMMUNITY CHORUS'S NEW DIRECTOR!!!

We meet every Thursday night, and rehearse – from 7:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m., at Irvine United Methodist Church-243 Main St., Irvine, KY.

We will be performing our Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 4, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.

For More Information: Robin – (606)-723-4678, Debbie – (606)-531-0465



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"I told you I'd show you where the big ones are!"