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BRN



2018

**ATHLETICS ANNUAL REPORT**



# 17<sup>TH</sup>

## WHAT A YEAR!

**T**he 2017-18 season was full of memorable moments. Some were grand in scale – like national championship performances, both team and individual. Others were of the everyday variety – like a warm interaction between a young child and his or her favorite Wildcat. They all added up to create another special year for UK Athletics, the story of which is told in part in the pages to follow.

While the people who authored the story of the 2017-18 season comprise a diverse group – hailing from the Lexington area, Norway and many places in between – what unites them is Kentucky. Nearly 500 Wildcat student-athletes and the coaches and staff who support them come from nearly every conceivable

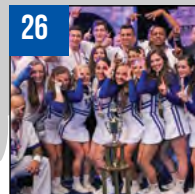
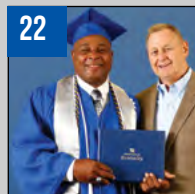
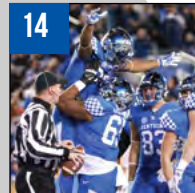
background and never lose their identities when they don the Blue and White, but they come together to represent one university, one Commonwealth and one incomparable fan base.

Those fans were there every step of the way in 2017-18, with nearly one million fans attending UK Athletics home events this season alone. The Big Blue Nation cheered its Wildcats to hundreds of victories, which all added up to a No. 17 finish in the Learfield Directors' Cup. The finish in the national all-sports standings was the third best in school history and the seventh straight in the top 30 for an athletics department that has begun to establish itself among the nation's best. To continue the climb, it will take a continued combined effort from the entire Kentucky family.

UK Athletics' trophy case became more crowded in 2017-18 thanks to national championships won by the rifle and cheerleading teams, volleyball's Southeastern Conference regular-season championship, men's basketball's fourth straight SEC Tournament title and a pair of podium finishes by the women's track and field team.



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The 2018 Annual Report is published by the UK Athletics Department and Mitch Barnhart, Athletics Director. It was written and edited by Guy Ramsey and UK Athletics Brand and Content Management staff. Design by Craig Hornberger, Brandon Kolditz, Drew Morris and Nathan Huff. Principal photography by UK Athletics/Chet White, Britney Howard and Quinn Foster. NCAA Rifle Championship photos by Milledge Austin. Printed by Welch Printing.

# RELYING ON OUR

# NORTH STAR

TO GUIDE US

People throughout the Northern Hemisphere have relied on Polaris – the North Star – to guide their way for centuries. The North Star has served countless sailors, travelers and even slaves seeking freedom on their journeys.

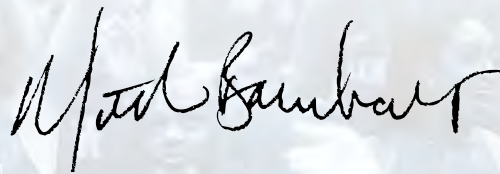
What has made the North Star so important for so long isn't its brightness. In fact, there are almost 50 stars brighter. The reason the North Star is the most important star in the night sky is because it's steady. It never moves. Brighter stars might draw more attention, but the North Star is the one you look toward when you need to know where to go.

That's what you, the Big Blue Nation, are to us: our North Star. You never waver in your support. You are always there. You guide our way, reminding us that we represent more than our university. When we wear Kentucky on our chests, we represent the Commonwealth and its 4.5 million people, plus the millions more tied to the Bluegrass State through our university and our teams. Your constant presence inspires us every day to honor you and the connection we share with you. When we succeed, you share in our success.

Thanks in large part to your support, we have had plenty of successes to celebrate together. This past year alone, we won

a national championship and two Southeastern Conference championships. We have had individual national champions, conference champions and All-Americans. We have finished 17th in the Learfield Directors' Cup – our third-best finish in school history and seventh straight top-30 finish. We have surpassed a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average for the 11th and 12th straight semesters, with nearly 100 Wildcats graduating along the way. We have served more than 4,000 hours in the community.

We have much to be proud of, but also much to work for. As we pursue the goals of Elite 1-3-5 – winning a championship in every sport by 2022, sustaining our 3.0 cumulative GPA and finishing in the top five of Directors' Cup standings by 2022 – we will count on our North Star to guide us.



**Mitch Barnhart**  
UK Athletics Director



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

## ALL THE INSPIRATION WE NEED

No university in America, let alone the Commonwealth, shares the kind of bond the University of Kentucky shares with its state. UK Athletics set out to honor that bond by touring the Bluegrass State on the Big Blue Caravan this summer.

An outreach effort led by Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart, the Big Blue Caravan started in the western part of the state and moved east over the course of a sweltering week in June. With an array of student-athletes, coaches, cheerleaders, dance team members and staff joining in, a few select Kentucky communities played host to a large contingent of some of their favorite Wildcats – including the Wildcat and Scratch mascots.

The Big Blue Caravan began with an emotional stop in Marshall County, the site of a tragic school shooting in January. Visiting Marshall County High School, Barnhart; John Calipari; Mark Stoops; men's basketball players PJ Washington and Brad Calipari; and football players Benny Snell Jr., Josh Allen and Kash Daniel addressed high school faculty and staff and others affected by the shooting. Their words couldn't heal the deep wounds

left by the shooting, but they did show the state's flagship university stands with any Kentucky community touched by the kind of heartbreak experienced in Marshall County.

The rest of the week would take the Big Blue Caravan to Madisonville on Tuesday, Fort Knox and Elizabethtown on Wednesday, Somerset on Thursday, and Pikeville on Friday. At each stop, there was a featured event open to the public with autographs and plenty of pictures, while the rest of each day was spent getting to know a little bit about each community and its unique character.

The end of the week brought a little exhaustion, plenty of friendships and more than a few stories, none more memorable than freshman football player Jerquavion Mahone boarding a bus he thought was bound for his dorm but instead took him all the way to Pikeville for the Caravan's final stop. Based on the smile he wore as he signed autographs, Mahone might bring a few of his teammates and join the Big Blue Caravan on purpose when it hits the road again next year.

Kentucky coaches, athletes and administrators connected with UK fans of all ages, from across the state, during its Big Blue Caravan in June that featured six stops in five days.





Head coach Harry Mullins makes the perfect confetti angel after his team upset defending champion West Virginia to capture the 2018 national title.

# SEIZING THE MOMENT

**N**o program at Kentucky has matched the recent success of the rifle team. Since 2009, the Wildcats had finished no worse than sixth at NCAA Championships, winning the title in 2011, coming in second three times and claiming three regular-season conference championships and a conference tournament championship along the way.

UK head coach Harry Mullins isn't one to rest on laurels, though. This season, in Mullins' words, was about "re-defining how we compete and enhancing our culture." Consider that culture enhanced, because the effort led to the Cats claiming the 2018 national championship in March.

From the outset, it was clear Kentucky had made a change for the better. The Wildcats posted scores of 4711 or better in their first four outings, showing the fruits of early morning practices that had them on the range at 6:15 a.m. Experienced veterans like senior Billy Azzinaro and juniors Hanna Carr and Cathryn Papasodora embraced the new direction, but it was a freshman who lifted his team to new heights.

Henrik Larsen crossed the Atlantic Ocean to enroll at

Kentucky and faced a bit of a culture shock in adjusting to life in Lexington after growing up in the small Norwegian town of Mysen. Even so, Larsen never lacked for confidence or ambition.



With his father traveling from Norway to watch him compete in the NCAA Championships, Henrik Larsen helped lead Kentucky to its second national title since 2011 and won the individual air rifle competition.

**“IT WAS A TEAM EFFORT FROM START TO FINISH, INCLUDING THE PARENTS, SUPPORT STAFF, STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING AND EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM. EVEN SOME OF THE OTHER COACHES LIKE NICK MINGIONE AND RACHEL LAWSON SENT US VIDEOS CONGRATULATING US. TO ME, THAT’S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A WILDCAT AND HAVING THE CULTURE THAT WE HAVE — YOU FEEL THE PRIDE IN IT. THIS WAS FOR THE KENTUCKY WILDCATS, NOT JUST KENTUCKY RIFLE.”**

— UK HEAD RIFLE COACH HARRY MULLINS



2018 NCAA NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

HANNA CARR

## KENTUCKY THROUGH AND THROUGH



**H**anna Carr's Kentucky ties couldn't run much deeper. Not only does she hail from barely 10 miles from the University of Kentucky campus, but she also grew up honing her craft at UK's rifle range and her father was a college teammate of Harry Mullins, the man who now coaches her. It's only natural, then, that Carr came to Kentucky to compete for her home-state school and study agricultural and medical biotechnology.

All Carr has done since is become a model of consistency, both in competition and in the classroom.

A fixture on the SEC Academic Honor Roll, Carr made an instant impact for her time by winning the Great American Rifle Conference individual air rifle championship and earning All-America honors as a freshman. Carr followed that up by claiming two more All-America honors as a sophomore. Then, as a junior, Carr was a key cog on UK's national championship team, receiving All-American recognition twice more to bring her career total to seven.

Carr's senior year is still ahead of her. What it will bring in terms of team and individual success remains to be seen, but there's no doubt Carr will further strengthen her UK ties along the way.

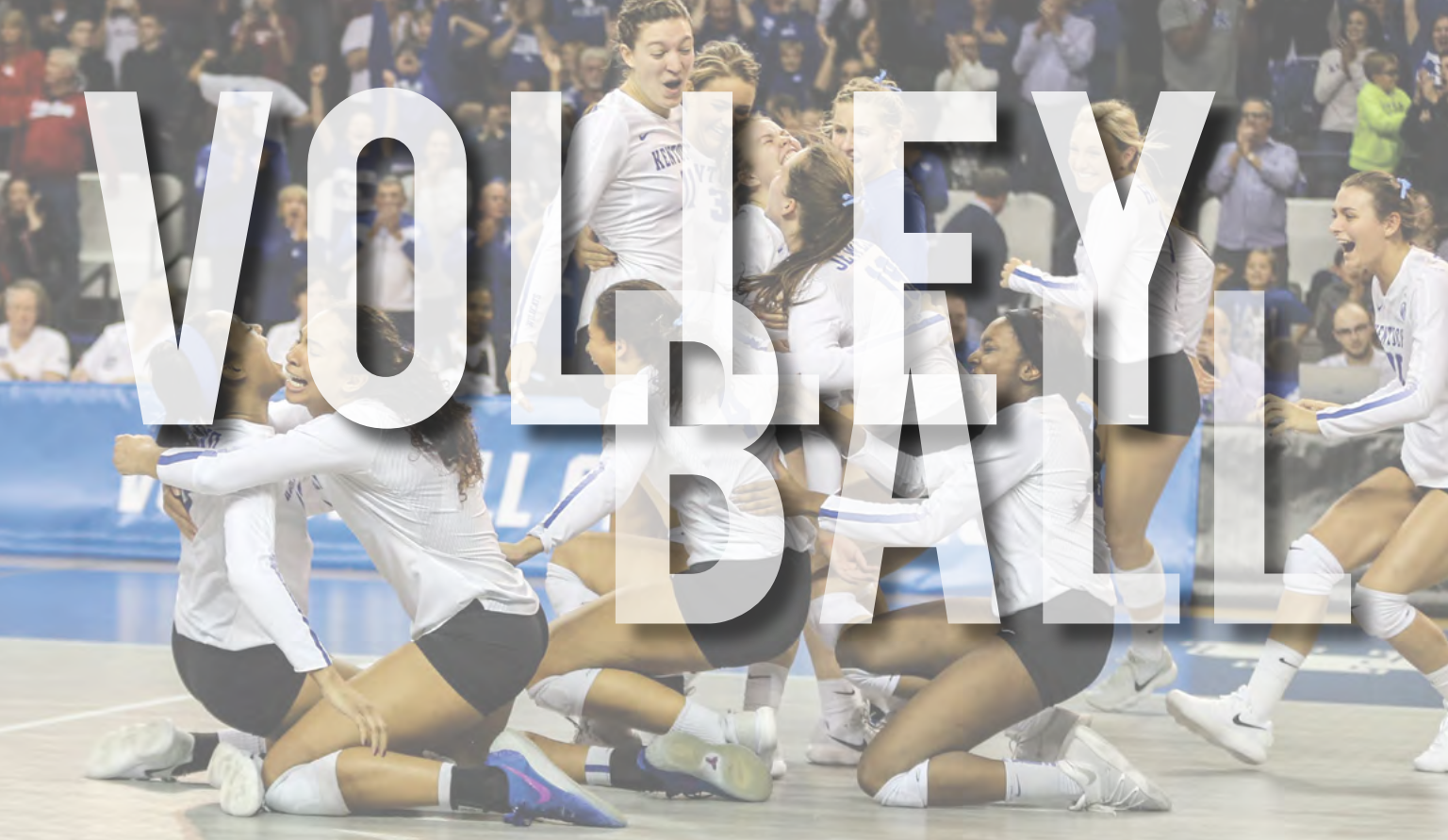


In spelling out his preseason goal to win the NCAA championship as an individual and for his team to match the feat, Larsen said, "I didn't come 5,500 miles to get second."

First place quickly became customary for the 2020 Olympic hopeful, as did school records. He posted school-best scores in smallbore and combined in his collegiate debut and by season's end his name dominated both national leaderboards and the UK record book, which earned him NCAA Shooter of the Year honors. Larsen's goal – as well as his team's – wasn't to win awards or break records. They wanted to win when it counted.

And so they did, building a lead in smallbore and holding off five-time defending national champion West Virginia to win the program's second national championship with a season-high score of 4717. Larsen also accomplished his individual objective by winning the individual air rifle title.

In the end, Henrik Larsen came 5,500 miles and got first.



# BREAKING THROUGH



WINNING ITS FIRST SEC TITLE SINCE 1988 AND MAKING ITS FIRST ELITE EIGHT TRIP SINCE 1987, UK VOLLEYBALL FINISHED 2017 ONLY WANTING MORE.

**T**here have been more near misses than Craig Skinner cares to count. Three times since 2009, Kentucky had entered the final match of the regular season needing a win to clinch a share of the Southeastern Conference championship. Three times, the Wildcats fell short. Though it might not have been the plan at the time, those near misses were all part of the process. UK was building toward a 2017 season in which the Cats would

break through. UK had rightfully high hopes entering the year, with arguably the most highly touted freshman class in school history joining a talented returning group. The Cats started the season strong and played their way into the top 10 entering a mid-October trip to face undefeated and top-ranked Florida, the prohibitive favorite for the SEC title. UK would score the upset in impressive fashion, landing the first blow in a season-long heavyweight fight with the Gators.



**“I THINK I PROBABLY YELLED TWO OR THREE TIMES THIS SEASON. MAY HAVE BEEN BACK IN AUGUST, BUT IT WAS HARDLY AT ALL. BECAUSE THEY KNEW WHAT TO DO. THEY KNEW WHAT THE EXPECTATIONS WERE. THEY KNEW HOW HARD TO WORK. THEY KNEW THAT IF THEY DIDN'T WORK HARD ENOUGH THEY COULDN'T BE WHAT THEY WANTED TO BE.”**

— UK HEAD VOLLEYBALL COACH CRAIG SKINNER



Awards came rolling in after a historic 2017 season. Leah Edmond (bottom left) was named a First-Team All-American, Madison Lilley (top left) was a Second-Team All-American and SEC Freshman of the Year, Kaz Brown (top right) was an Honorable Mention All-American and All-SEC performer, and Craig Skinner (bottom right) was named SEC Co-Coach of the Year.

A little more than two weeks later, Florida counterpunched, sweeping UK in Lexington. For the final three weeks of the regular season, it was game on. The Cats, knowing the Gators were unlikely to falter, had to win their final seven matches, and win they did. In fact, UK would lose just two sets en route to its first SEC title in more than 30 years, with a different star stepping up every night. One match it would be First-Team All-American Leah Edmond and freshman standout Avery Skinner carrying the load, the next seniors Kaz Brown, Emily Franklin and Darian Mack. All the while, the Cats could count on SEC Libero of the Year Ashley Dusek and All-American setter Madison Lilley.

After the last match was won at Georgia, the newly crowned SEC champions were welcomed at the airport by jubilant fans. In the weeks that followed, many of those same fans were in Memorial Coliseum to cheer the Cats all the way to their first Elite Eight berth since 1987.

As impressive as the feats might have been, the Cats still have more in mind, namely a national championship.

ASHLEY DUSEK

# NO STOPPING HER

**F**our years ago, Ashley Dusek arrived in Lexington an East Barnard, Texas, native and a relative stranger to life in Kentucky. She left having earned the title of Miss Wildcat at the CATSPY Awards, recognized for the all-around excellence in athletics, academics, character and service that UK Athletics seeks to cultivate in its student-athletes.

Both in terms of stature and offensive statistics, Dusek never quite measured up to her Kentucky teammates. Standing just 5-foot-7 in a lineup full of 6 footers, Dusek had just one kill all season. But when it comes to defense, passion and heart, no one stands above Dusek. She won back-to-back-to-back SEC Libero of the Year awards and ranks second in the 25-point rally scoring era in program history in digs.

Not even an offseason knee injury could stop Dusek from helping lead UK to a historic season in her senior year. She returned after missing the first seven matches of 2017 and the Wildcats promptly reeled off 14 straight wins and finished the regular season 24-2 to claim a share of the SEC title and an Elite Eight berth.

A regular volunteer and fixture on the SEC Academic Honor Roll, Dusek was a model citizen during her four years at UK. And though she graduated, Kentucky has become a second home for Dusek.





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**CHAMPIONS**

# EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE

WEATHERING A MIDSEASON STORM, KENTUCKY STAYED TOGETHER AND STAYED THE COURSE EN ROUTE TO UK'S 31ST SEC TOURNAMENT TITLE AND YET ANOTHER SWEET 16 TRIP.

**J**ohn Calipari has coached a national championship team and led a group that started the season 38-0. And that's just in his nine seasons at Kentucky. While it will be difficult for any team to surpass Coach Cal's previous groups in terms of on-court success, the 2017-18 Wildcats were superlative for another special reason.

Of all the seasons of his Hall of Fame career, Coach Cal counts this one as the most rewarding.

It began as it always does at Kentucky – with lofty expectations – and reached points in January and February when it seemed certain the Wildcats would fall well short of them, and maybe even short of the NCAA Tournament. Instead, rebounding from a four-game losing streak and the resulting bubble talk, UK played its best basketball in the season's final weeks.

The rewarding feeling, for Coach Cal, comes from the contrast between the lows and the highs of 2018. The lows brought individual struggles and collective adversity, while the highs came with a memorable comeback win at West Virginia and four straight double-digit wins on the heels of that losing streak. Players went from wallowing in their own failings

to rejoicing in one another's successes, with Calipari patiently prodding along the way.

Maybe the signature moment of the season came when a player, in the midst of the darkest times, texted Calipari to say, "Coach, we need you more than ever now." Coach Cal has still never revealed the player behind the text message, primarily because its significance mattered more than its sender. It served as a reminder to Calipari exactly how young his team was and that the last thing he could do was give up on them. So he never did.

The result was something to behold, as UK blitzed through the SEC Tournament for its 31st league tournament championship and fourth in a row before a run in the NCAA Tournament cut short by a Sweet 16 loss to Kansas State. Every contributor had his moment in the process, from Wenyen Gabriel's seven 3s against Alabama to Sacha Killeya-Jones' put-back slam and Quade Green's big shots against Tennessee to Hamidou Diallo's explosion against Buffalo. No one balked as Calipari centered his offense around stars Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Kevin Knox and PJ Washington, and no one blinked when Jarred Vanderbilt went down due to injury.

The Cats had grown too close for any of that.



DILLON PULLIAM

## TAKING HIS GAME TO ANOTHER LEVEL

**D**illon Pulliam, like many of his teammates, found himself pulled in two directions at the end of the season: staying at the school he loves or pursuing his dream. His dream is just a little bit different. Pulliam, the Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year at the 2018 CATSPYs, aspires to design computer systems.

The Cynthiana, Kentucky, native transferred to UK after spending his freshman season at Transylvania. He immediately made an impact as a teammate and practice player, though he spent his first year as a Wildcat redshirting. Pulliam never sat out in the classroom, where he studied computer engineering and computer science while minoring in mathematics.

A fixture on the Dean's List – naturally, considering his 4.0 grade-point average – Pulliam was a two-time All-Southeastern Conference Academic Team member during his time with the Wildcats, while being a part of three SEC Tournament and two SEC regular-season titles. Pulliam was also named to the SEC Community Service Team.

The next leg of his journey, after graduating with a year of eligibility remaining, will take him to one of the top engineering and computer science programs in the world. Pulliam will pursue a master's degree in electrical and computer engineering at Carnegie Mellon starting in the fall of 2018.



**“WHAT THEY ACCOMPLISHED THIS YEAR CAN NEVER BE TAKEN AWAY. TO PLAY LIKE THEY PLAYED ALL YEAR — COMING TOGETHER, BATTLING THROUGH ADVERSITY, CONTINUING TO WORK EVERY DAY AND REPRESENTING ALL OF US THE WAY THEY DID — IS TRULY AMAZING.”**

— UK HEAD BASKETBALL COACH JOHN CALIPARI



# WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

# UNGETTABLE

## MEN'S GOLF



Cooper Musselman won the first individual tournament championship of his career in October, leading UK to a third straight team victory to start the 2017-18 season at the Crooked Stick Invitational.



The Kentucky men's golf team had high hopes entering the 2017-18 season, bound and determined to erase the memories of falling a mere two strokes short of a place in the NCAA Championships in May 2017. Within barely a month of the start of the fall season, the Wildcats had plenty of new memories.

The season began at the Wolf Run Intercollegiate, with four players finishing in the top 10 to lead UK to its first championship at the event since 2006. Two weeks later, UK cruised to another team title at the Bearcat Invitational with a collective score of 32-under, paced by Chip McDaniel claiming an individual tournament victory for the third time in

his decorated career. Then, for the first time in program history, UK won its third championship in a row by winning the Crooked Stick Invitational by a solitary stroke, with Cooper Musselman's first collegiate tournament victory playing a key role.

The tone set and their confidence built, UK went about its business the rest of the season, earning a spot in an NCAA regional, the same stage where the Cats fell short last season. In spite of facing a 10-stroke deficit entering the final day, UK posted a 3-under round to claim an NCAA Championships berth in dramatic fashion. There, the Wildcats finished 21st overall to cap a historic season that included four total tournament victories.

UK'S FOUR REGULAR SEASON GOLF TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONSHIPS SET THE TONE FOR A MEMORABLE POSTSEASON THAT ENDED IN STILLWALTER, OKLA.



**SEPT. 8-10**

**WOLF RUN INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONS**

PLACE	NAME	RD1	RD2	RD3	TOTAL
T3	Lukas Euler	70	75	71	216 (+3)
T5	Matt Liston	74	73	71	218 (+5)
T7	Cooper Musselman	70	79	71	220 (+7)
T11	Chip McDaniel	72	74	75	221 (+8)
T26	Fred Allen Meyer	72	78	77	227 (+14)
1	KENTUCKY	284	300	288	872 (+20)

**SEPT. 25-26**

**BEARCAT INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONS**

PLACE	NAME	RD1	RD2	RD3	TOTAL
1	Chip McDaniel	66	67	68	201 (-12)
T9	Cooper Musselman	72	67	68	207 (-6)
T11	Fred Allen Meyer	71	68	69	208 (-5)
T16	Lukas Euler	69	67	73	209 (-7)
T32	Matt Liston	73	74	68	215 (+2)
1	KENTUCKY	278	269	273	820 (-32)

**OCT. 16-17**

**CROOKED STICK INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONS**

PLACE	NAME	RD1	RD2	RD3	TOTAL
1	Cooper Musselman	70	70	70	210 (-6)
T14	Lukas Euler	73	72	73	218 (+2)
T19	Chip McDaniel	77	69	73	219 (+3)
22	Fred Allen Meyer	72	74	74	220 (+4)
T34	Jacob Cook	74	75	65	224 (+8)
1	KENTUCKY	289	285	290	864 (E)

**APRIL 9-10**

**GARY KOCH INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONS**

PLACE	NAME	RD1	RD2	RD3	TOTAL
2	Chip McDaniel	66	69	66	201 (-15)
T3	Max Mehies	70	71	68	209 (-7)
T6	Fred Allen Meyer	71	69	70	210 (-6)
17	Lukas Euler	72	68	73	213 (-3)
T22	Cooper Musselman	71	75	70	216 (E)
1	KENTUCKY	278	277	274	829 (-35)

CHIP MCDANIEL



## RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Chip McDaniel had to have dreamed of a moment like this growing up. The Manchester, Kentucky, native – playing for his home-state school and the same team his older brother was a member of a few years prior – was in the middle of a strong back nine with his team's season on the line. The Wildcats had charged back from 10 shots down entering the final day of play at NCAA regionals and McDaniel was the last Wildcat on the course. With UK sitting one stroke ahead of Ole Miss for the final NCAA Championships berth, McDaniel needed a par on the 18th hole, a 444-yard par four.

McDaniel calmly stepped to the tee box and laced a 326-yard drive into the fairway, leaving him with a 118-yard approach. All the All-American and All-Southeastern Conference performer did was bury the approach for an eagle and send his team to its NCAA Championships appearance, finishing off a 5-under back nine. McDaniel had been Kentucky's senior leader all season, but never quite so dramatically.

It was a fitting cap to a decorated career for McDaniel, which included three individual tournament victories, a runner-up finish at the SEC Tournament and two trips for his team to NCAA Championships. A degree in accounting in hand, McDaniel will pursue a professional career, starting in his backyard at the Barbasol Championship.







# MAKING CHAMPIONSHIP



**T**he top spot on the podium was a favorite place of the Kentucky Wildcats at the 2018 NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in June, as four different Cats won individual national titles in Eugene, Oregon.

The first to make it there was Tim Duckworth with a personal-best 8,336 in the decathlon, the No. 9 NCAA all-time decathlon score. Backing up another impressive performance at indoors, Duckworth became just the second man to win the NCAA decathlon

and indoor heptathlon in the same year. He is in good company, as world-record holder and two-time Olympic gold medalist Ashton Eaton is the only other man to accomplish the feat.

Not long after that, Olivia Gruver took her turn on the podium by repeating as NCAA

Four different Wildcats won national titles at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships, with Olivia Gruver (top left) and Tim Duckworth (top right) winning the pole vault and decathlon, respectively; Jasmine Camacho-Quinn (above left) taking 100-meter hurdles gold; and Sydney McLaughlin dominating the 400-meter hurdles.



outdoor pole vault champion. Both the season and meet were full of adversity for Gruver, as she overcame ankle trouble and missing her first two attempts of the competition to vault her outdoor personal best.

On the final day at Tracktown, Jasmine Camacho-Quinn had to make up ground to win her national championship. Running an impressive time of 12.70 seconds, Camacho-Quinn reclaimed gold in the same 100-meter hurdles event she won as a freshman in 2016.

UK's final national championship came from the wom-

# STRIDES

BOTH THE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD TEAMS MADE STRONG STATEMENTS AT THE 2018 OUTDOOR NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS, WITH THE WOMEN REACHING THE PODIUM FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR – THIRD TIME IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS – AND THE MEN POSTING A 16TH-PLACE FINISH.

an who might just be the next face of international track and field: Sydney McLaughlin. After a record-setting and award-winning freshman season that saw her seemingly run a different event in every meet, McLaughlin turned her attention to her signature event at NAAs: the 400-meter hurdles. Neither her fellow competitors nor the hail that began to fall during her race were any obstacle, as McLaughlin ran the second-fastest time in NCAA Championships history.

When the final individual medals had been awarded, UK stepped to the podium one final time as a team. The Wildcats didn't quite succeed in their bid to take the top spot, settling instead for fourth place – UK's second straight podium finish and third in the last four years. The men's team, meanwhile, tied for 16th place, improving 43 places from a year ago.

JACOB THOMSON



# GOING THE DISTANCE

Jacob Thomson didn't start his college career at Kentucky, but he packed plenty into his three years as a Wildcat. Thomson, after coming from Holy Cross in Louisville via North Carolina State, became one of the most decorated men's distance runners in school history – both in competition and in the classroom.

He made a splash in his first outdoor season in 2016, pulling off the rare double by winning the 5k and 10k at the Southeastern Conference Outdoor Track and Field Championships. He would claim the title of SEC champion once more in 2018 by winning the indoor 5,000 meters. All told, he won six SEC medals.

He also translated his success to the national level, as he was three times a First-Team All-American. The last time came in his final collegiate race, as he ran a personal-best time to place sixth in the 10k at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships, the third year in a row he qualified for the final of the race.

Away from competition, Thomson was also a standout. He was named SEC Cross Country Scholar Athlete of the Year each of his last two seasons and graduated in May with a degree in accounting and finance. For his work, he was named an Academic All-American as a senior.



# PLAYING WITH A WINNING EDGE



Benny Snell Jr. became the first UK payer to rush for 1,000 yards in back-to-back seasons, totaling 1,333 yards in 2017.

**W**hen it comes to passion and love for the game, it's tough to beat Stephen Johnson and Benny Snell Jr. When it comes to showing that passion and love, the two players – who shared a backfield the last two seasons – couldn't be more different.

On one hand you have Johnson, the unflappable senior quarterback. Nearly always cool and calm, Johnson was a steadying presence for his Kentucky teammates, leading clutch drive after clutch drive and saving his best for the biggest moments. On the other hand is Snell, the exuberant underclassman running back with a hatred of getting tackled. What they had in common was a steadfast unwillingness to let anything – neither injury nor any opponent – get in the way of their pursuit of victory. In many ways, Snell and Johnson were the heartbeat of their Kentucky team, leading UK to its first back-to-back bowl trips in seven years.

The season included an impressive win at South Carolina – UK's fourth in a row over the Gamecocks – that came after the Wildcats allowed a long touchdown on the game's first play from scrimmage. The Cats also scored a pair of heart-stopping

home victories over Missouri and Tennessee, with Johnson and Snell playing leading roles in both. UK got its seventh win at Vanderbilt in dominant 44-21 fashion, a game in which Snell became UK's all-time touchdown leader and the first Wildcat in history with back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons.

Johnson, having poured everything he had into his two years as a Wildcat, decided to hang up his spikes after the 2017 season. Snell, meanwhile, has work left to do. While the season brought another bowl trip, it also left Snell and UK with much in the way of unfinished business in 2018. The Cats have their minds on a big year, with Snell returning alongside talented teammates on both sides of the ball. In fact, three of those teammates – linebacker Josh Allen, tight end C.J. Conrad and safety Mike Edwards – bypassed opportunities to enter the NFL Draft early.

In other words, Snell will have company as the heartbeat of his team. With Allen, Edwards and a veteran group on the side of the ball where he made his name, Mark Stoops expects to have his best defense to date. That figures to work well in tandem with a running back staking his place among the best players in Kentucky football history.

“THESE GUYS HAVE WORKED EXTREMELY HARD TO GO TO BACK-TO-BACK BOWL GAMES. THESE GUYS HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION AND I KNOW EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM WANTS TO CONTINUE TO PUSH THE PROGRAM AND TAKE IT TO ANOTHER LEVEL. I ANTICIPATE WE’LL DO THAT.”

– UK HEAD FOOTBALL COACH MARK STOOPS



CHARLES WALKER



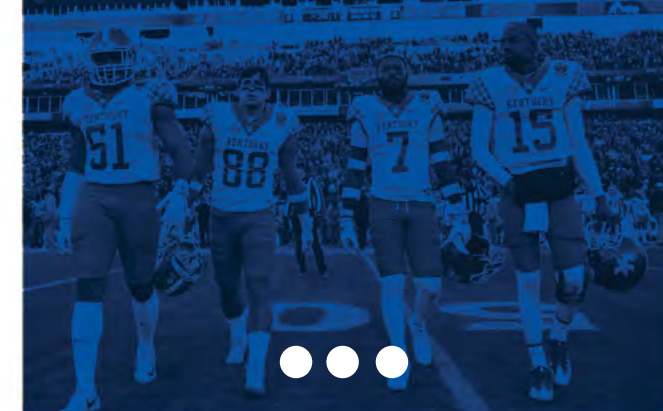
## CLASS ACT

**O**n paper, Charles Walker was a walk-on. In practice (and games), Walker was anything but.

Walker – a Louisville native – came to Kentucky with a guarantee of nothing more than an opportunity, of which he took advantage at every turn. He earned playing time in his very first college game as a freshman, and two years into his career had played in all 24 games of the 2014 and 2015 seasons.

In fall camp leading up to the 2016 season, his technical walk-on status came to an end. Recognizing his unmatched work ethic and special-teams prowess, Mark Stoops awarded Walker a scholarship, drawing a huge positive reaction from his teammates. That didn't stop Walker from working though.

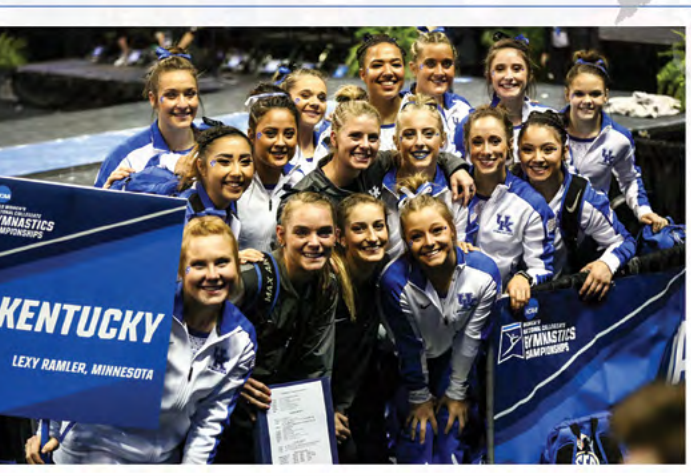
Earning an ever-expanding role, Walker had a knack for making clutch drive-saving catches and rarely – if ever – dropping a pass.



Stephen Johnson (left) cemented his legacy as one of the toughest players in Kentucky football history in overcoming a myriad of injuries to lead UK to a second straight bowl trip. The most dramatic such instance came in a 29-26 win over Tennessee in which he sprinted from the locker room after being cleared to return to the game, earning a loud ovation from the Kroger Field crowd.

# GYMNASIASTICS

## BLUE PHOENIX



UK GYMNASTICS MADE MORE HISTORIC STRIDES IN 2018, REACHING THE NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER.

UK claimed its spot in the NCAA Championships with a terrific series of performances on bars in Minneapolis (far left). The Cats were led all season by All-American all-arounder Mollie Korth (near left).

It was no accident, where the Kentucky gymnastics team opened its season.

Leaving the friendly confines of Memorial Coliseum for the big stage of Rupp Arena, the Wildcats sought out a new setting for Excite Night. The Big Blue Nation responded, with 10,006 filling the lower level of the hallowed home of Kentucky men's basketball to see the Cats win the quad meet. The victory was nice, but the experience proved more important. Realizing that his goals for the program would require high levels of performance in unfamiliar venues, head coach Tim Garrison loved the way his team responded in Rupp.

The success away from Memorial would continue all season, as UK won its first two road meets against ranked Southeastern Conference foes Arkansas and Auburn. That vaulted the Wildcats into the top five of national rankings.

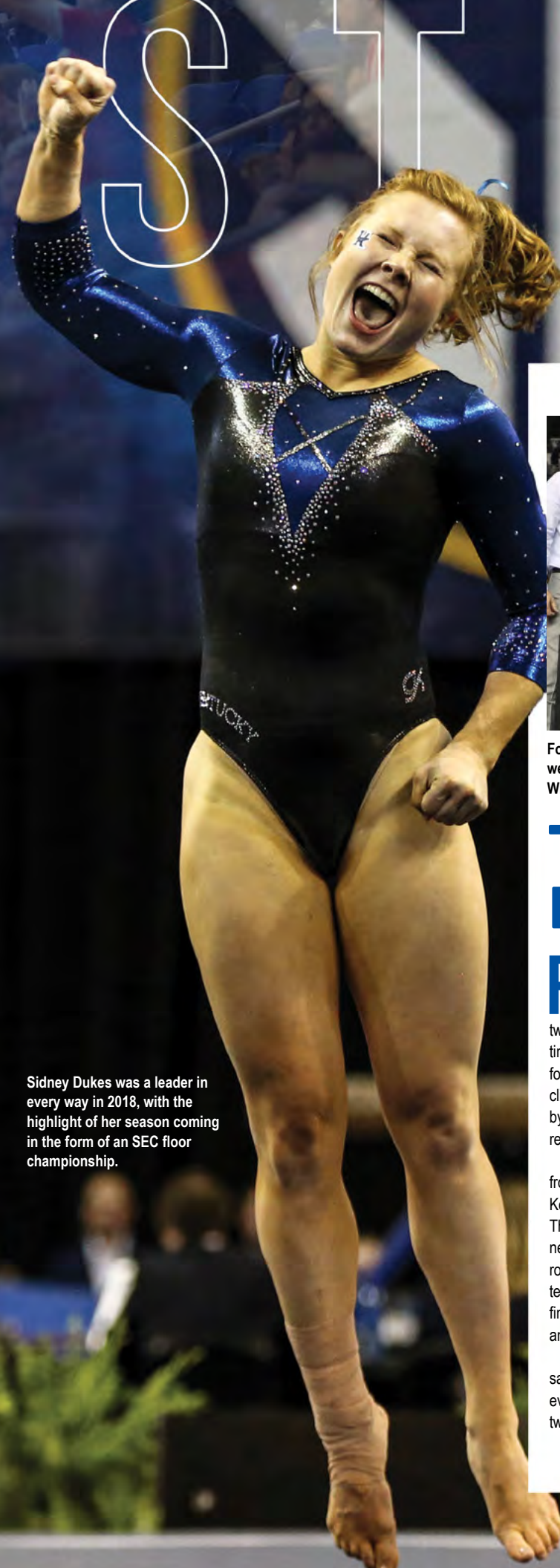
A strong regular season would position UK well for the postseason, which began at the SEC Championships. There, the Wildcats earned a top-four seed and the right to compete in the evening session of the prestigious meet for the first time in program history. UK capitalized and finished in the top four at

SECs for the first time, with junior Sidney Dukes taking home a share of the SEC floor championship by scoring a 9.9 on the event.

Another notable first would follow as the Cats headed to exactly the kind of unfamiliar setting for which they had prepared: the NCAA Minneapolis Regional. UK entered the final rotation at the meet trailing, needing big performances on bars to overcome Denver. All the Cats did was get scores of 9.9 from Mollie Korth, Katrina Coca and Ella Warren and a 49.4 as a team. UK surged to just the fourth score of 197-plus in school history and certainly the most important. The Cats had booked their trip to the national semifinals for the first time ever.

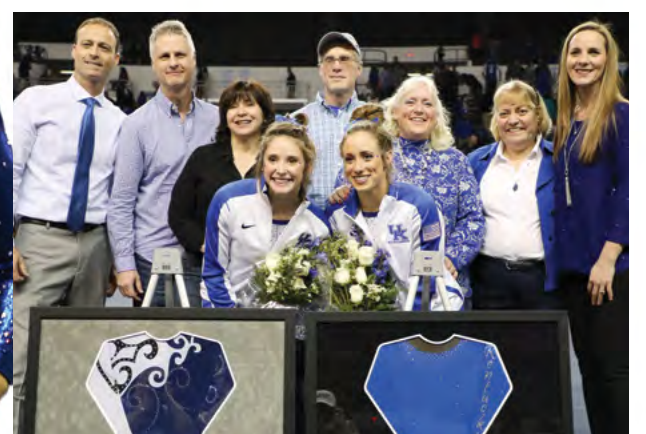
The achievement led to top honors for Garrison and his assistants, who were National Coach and Assistant Coaches of the Year, but they were not satisfied by merely reaching college gymnastics' biggest stage. Garrison saw UK's score of 196.0625 – which fell short of the Super Six and included an all-around score that earned Korth All-America honors for the second season in a row – as “just the beginning of our climb.”

The ascent continues in 2019.



Sidney Dukes was a leader in every way in 2018, with the highlight of her season coming in the form of an SEC floor championship.

KATIE CARLISLE & CORI RECHENMACHER



Four-year letterwinners Katie Carlisle (left center) and Cori Rechenmacher were honored as part of UK's Senior Night recognition following the Wildcats win over No. 21 Ohio State last March.

## TWO LEAPS OF FAITH PAY OFF

Recruiting in college gymnastics happens early, with prospects often selecting a school as many as three years before actually arriving on campus. For that reason, Katie Carlisle and Cori Rechenmacher – the two seniors on this year's Kentucky team – have been Wildcats for a long time now. The two gymnasts bought in to head coach Tim Garrison's vision for the UK program, even as it was clear Kentucky would have a steep climb ahead to compete at the highest level of college gymnastics. But by the time their eligibility was complete this spring, their faith had been rewarded.

Carlisle came to UK from Newark, Ohio, while Rechenmacher came from Batavia, Illinois. Both committed themselves fully to building the Kentucky program, contributing from the moment they arrived on campus. There were lots of highs, lows and long days, which all culminated in Minneapolis in March. With their careers on the line at regionals and their own routines complete, the seniors stepped back and watched as six of their teammates put it all on the line in UK's bars rotation. As soon as they were finished and UK's spot in the NCAA Championships was clinched, Carlisle and Rechenmacher burst into tears.

“This program has grown so much over the last four years,” Garrison said. “These two seniors were a big part of that growth. They've helped us every bit of the way, whether they were competing all-around or in one or two events. They've helped the other athletes achieve at a higher level.”



WOMEN'S

# SWIMMING & DIVING

we are  we are  
**COMPETITORS**



Senior Bridgette Alexander (left) finished her Kentucky career off right, as she earned Honorable Mention All-America recognition in two events at the NCAA Championships.

ASIA SEIDT



## HER TIME TO SHINE

After making the short trek down I-64 from her native Louisville, Asia Seidt was a star in her freshman season as a member of the Kentucky women's swimming and diving team. She was the Southeastern Conference Freshman of the year in 2016-17, as well as a First-Team All-SEC performer, two-time First-Team All-American and a three-time SEC medalist.

In spite of all of her accomplishments, she was never the star as a freshman. With a former national champion and one of the best swimmers in school history – Danielle Galyer – on the roster during her freshman season, it wouldn't be until Seidt became a sophomore that she would step onto center stage. When she did, Seidt made it count.

Seidt won a pair of SEC championships in the 200 and 100 backstroke events as a sophomore, adding a silver in the 200 IM for good measure. At the NCAA Championships – a year after she counted on Galyer to calm her nerves before competing in the meet for the first time – Seidt won the silver medal in the same 200 backstroke event in which Galyer won her national championship.



## KEEPING ELITE COMPANY

LED BY SEVEN ALL-AMERICANS, THE UK WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING TEAM POSTED ITS SECOND CONSECUTIVE TOP-15 FINISH AT NCAAS IN 2018, PLACING 14TH.

With most of the top contributors returning from the 2016-17 team that reestablished itself on the national stage with a 14th-place finish at the NCAA Championships, the Kentucky women's swimming and diving team had high hopes entering the 2017-18 season. The Wildcats delivered on those high hopes and posted yet another top-15 finish, marking their first back-to-back such finishes in more than a decade.

Continuing their rise under sixth-year head coach Lars Jorgensen, the Cats had a solid regular season that was highlighted by a memorable win at 10th-ranked Louisville. It was UK's first win since 2009 over the rival Cardinals, with Louisville native Asia Seidt winning three individual events and UK's 400 freestyle relay team of Geena Freriks, Bridgette Alexander, Haley McInerney and Madison Winstead closing it out.

Seidt was the standout once again when the postseason began, as the outstanding sophomore claimed a pair of gold medals at the Southeastern Conference Championships. Freriks, meanwhile, became the first Wildcat to win the SEC

For the second consecutive season, UK brought home the SEC Freshman Swimmer of the Year award as Bailey Bonnett received the honor in 2018.



Junior Geena Freriks won a Southeastern Conference championship for the second straight season in 2017-18, becoming the first Wildcat since 1999 to claim gold in the 500 freestyle.

championship in the 500 freestyle since 1999, helping UK to a fourth-place finish at the meet.

The NCAA Championships came next, where the Wildcats saved their best for the last day of the season.

With plenty of opportunities and the pressure that came with them on the final day at the NCAA Championships, UK capitalized by more than doubling its team point total and coming in 14th for the meet. Impressively, three Wildcats made the championship final in the 200 backstroke, with silver medalist Seidt being joined by teammates Ali Galyer and Bridgette Alexander. Alexander rounded out her UK career at the meet by claiming Honorable Mention All-America distinction in the 400 medley relay as well as the 200 backstroke. She was one of seven Wildcats to earn a combined 15 All-America honors and the only one who will not be back next season, as Bailey Bonnett, Freriks, Galyer, McInerney, Seidt and Winstead were all underclassmen in 2017-18.

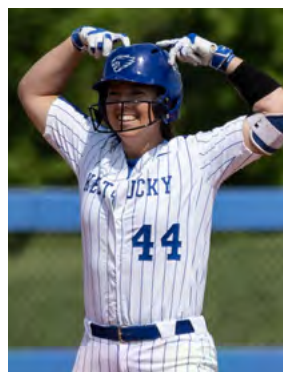
With so much talent returning once again, the Wildcats will set their sights on making yet more strides as a program.



# SUPER CATS



**S**uccess has become an expectation for Kentucky softball in recent seasons, with national seeds in the NCAA Tournament and super-regional trips the norm. Don't let that delude you into thinking the Wildcats take that success for granted. Fresh off yet another strong season in 2017, Rachel Lawson and her team didn't rest on their laurels. Having fallen just a couple wins shy of the 2017 Women's College World Series after losing to powerhouse Oregon, Lawson engineered an overhaul.



Slick-fielding shortstop Katie Reed (left) was a steady presence atop UK's lineup, while Abbey Cheek (above) was the primary middle-of-the-lineup run producer. Senior Rachael Metzger (right) spent most of the season in a supporting role, but had a grand slam and a three-run double as a pinch hitter in the Lexington Regional.

**RIDING AN IMPROVED AND DYNAMIC OFFENSE, UK RETURNED TO SUPER REGIONALS FOR THE FIFTH TIME IN SIX SEASONS IN 2018.**

we are  we are  
**COMPETITORS**

Pitching and defense – plus some timely hitting – had always been the Cats' calling card, but Lawson wasn't content with her team's offense. She and her assistants Kristine Himes and Molly Belcher challenged UK's hitters to improve, and so they did.

UK scored 1.4 more runs per game in 2018, while boosting its batting average from .282 to .304. Slugger Abbey Cheek ranked among Southeastern Conference leaders in home runs (18) and runs batted in (56), while Bailey Vick (.357 batting average), Katie Reed (.352), Brooklin Hinz (.347) and Jenny Schaper (.323) terrorized opposing pitchers. That allowed Kentucky to continue to succeed as a young pitching staff made up of freshman Grace Baalman, sophomore Autumn Humes and senior Erin Rethlake found its feet against the nation's toughest schedule.

That challenging schedule helped UK earn yet another national seed and the right to host regional games at John Cropp Stadium, where the Cats put their offensive improvement on display. UK scored 28 runs in sweeping through three games at the Lexington Regional, becoming just the third team in NCAA Tournament history to win each of its regional games in run-rule fashion.

UK would sustain its momentum in making a second trip in a row out west to Oregon in making its fifth super regional appearance in six seasons, taking game one from the No. 1 overall seed Ducks. The Cats did so by scoring nine runs, the most allowed by Oregon all season, but the Ducks would respond by taking games two and three to end Kentucky's season.

Disappointed as UK might have been to have fallen short of its goal to reach the Women's College World Series, Lawson couldn't help but be pleased about the growth of her offense. With UK's pitching staff having a year of experience under its belt and the majority of the Cats' position players back next season, she has her eye on a breakthrough in 2019.

BAILEY VICK



## LIVING HER DREAMS

The small photograph shown here is not of the highest quality, yet it clearly shows a young Bailey Vick—decked out in Kentucky gear—posing alongside Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart. Vick was born to wear UK blue.

Enrolling at her home-state university was a no-brainer, but it wasn't always so obvious the Paducah, Kentucky, native would suit up for the Wildcats, even after a decorated career at McCracken County High School. The standout student considered focusing solely on academics at UK, but she was too speedy and skillful to keep off the field. She was a Southeastern Conference All-Freshman honoree in her debut season, then led UK with a .357 batting average in helping lead UK as a sophomore. She earned the Scratch Award at the 2018 CATSPYs for being the top female walk-on on UK's campus, as well as being named to the All-South Region Team.

Her academics, meanwhile, haven't suffered one bit. The accounting major has a perfect 4.0 grade-point average and was a First-Team CoSIDA Academic All-American this year.



**“ IN THE POSTSEASON, TYPICALLY WHAT WE DO IS WE DOMINATE ON THE MOUND, WE PLAY GOOD DEFENSE AND THEN WE STAY IN THE GAME LONG ENOUGH TO WIN IT. BUT THEN, AFTER OUR FIRST (REGIONAL) GAME, I STARTED TO UNDERSTAND, WOW, THIS TEAM IS REALLY GETTING IT DONE OFFENSIVELY. I DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT WINNING. I JUST WONDERED HOW LONG IT WAS GOING TO TAKE US TO GET THE EIGHT RUNS. ”**

— UK HEAD SOFTBALL COACH RACHEL LAWSON



Oliver White strode across the stage at Rupp Arena in May, earning his degree in community and leadership development.

# BIG BLUE PROMISES KEPT

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A LIFETIME SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UK ATHLETICS HAS OFFERED SINCE 1989, OLIVER WHITE GRADUATED 34 YEARS AFTER HIS KENTUCKY FOOTBALL CAREER ENDED.

**O**liver White has led a full life, but earning a college degree has always been on his mind. A standout career as a tight end for the Kentucky football team led the Pittsburgh Steelers to pick him in the 10th round of the 1985 NFL Draft, but his career lasted only one season. Soon after, he moved back to Kentucky and got married. He began life after football as a coach before making a good living in manufacturing as a supervisor and plant manager, all to support his family. That degree never quite happened. Then he watched his sons walk across the stage and earn college degrees of their own. Inspired, White came back to Kentucky. He wasn't on his own either.

“WHEN YOU’RE YOUNG, YOU DON’T THINK AHEAD. I TELL THESE GUYS, ‘FINISH YOUR DEGREE WHILE YOU’RE THERE BECAUSE SOONER OR LATER YOU’RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO PLAY BALL.’ FOR ME, GETTING A DEGREE MEANS EVERYTHING.”

— OLIVER WHITE, UK CLASS OF 2018

Bob Bradley – the UK associate athletics director for student services who will retire this year – never throws away a file on a student-athlete, nor should he. Bradley helped the late C.M. Newton launch the Post-Eligibility Program in 1989, which pays for tuition and books for any UK student-athlete who returns to school – no matter whether it’s three years or three decades after they complete their eligibility. Prior to White’s return, more than 150 former Wildcats have returned and graduated, including Jodie Meeks and Randall Cobb.

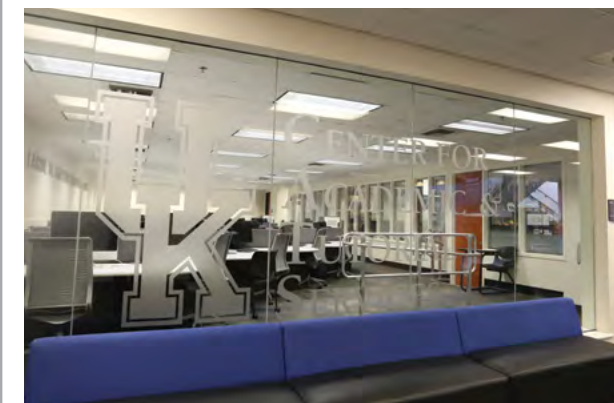
White, after sitting down with Bradley, learned he would need to change his major since recreation no longer existed as a degree. Bradley suggested community leadership and development, which fit well with White’s goal to work with a non-profit organization or at UK. While he completed his coursework, White got a jumpstart on that, volunteering in UK’s Center for Academic and Tutorial Services and helping mentor young men and women.

In May 2018, White’s patience and hard work paid off. Thirty-four years after he played his final game as a Wildcat, White walked across the stage at commencement and received his diploma from the University of Kentucky.



One of the highlights of Bob Bradley’s last year before retirement as associate athletics director for student services was watching Oliver White earn his UK degree.

CATS



## A CONCEPT AHEAD OF ITS TIME

**T**he year was 1981. College athletics was surging in popularity, resulting in an unprecedentedly competitive landscape and new time demands for student-athletes. Though they took the same classes as regular students, the challenges they faced were unique. Recognizing their student-athletes’ need for special academic support, the University of Kentucky developed a brand-new concept: a first-of-its-kind academic center dedicated to student-athletes. Nearly four decades later athletics departments across the country have centers of their own, but the Center for Academic and Tutorial Services (CATS), its counselors and its tutors continue to set the standard for academic support in college athletics.

Nothing speaks to that support better than the success of Wildcat student-athletes in the classroom. With a 3.181 grade-point average in the spring 2018 semester, UK Athletics has now eclipsed Mitch Barnhart’s goal of a 3.0 cumulative department GPA for 12 straight semesters. Those high marks also yield diplomas, with nearly 100 current and former Wildcats graduating during the 2017-18 academic year alone. UK also once again broke a school record in the Graduation Success Rate and tied another in the Federal Graduation Rate in numbers announced by the NCAA in November, while a school-record six UK teams earned awards for their high marks in the NCAA’s Academic Progress Rate measure. Dating back to the APR’s inception 13 years ago, none of UK’s 22 teams have ever incurred an APR penalty.





Sometimes it's in the basement of Memorial Coliseum packing lunches for God's Pantry. Other times they take a walk down the street to ring the bell for the Salvation Army at the neighborhood Kroger. Car rides to tutor at a local elementary school or to visit patients at the UK Children's Hospital aren't uncommon either. The Wildcats will even cross international borders to help those in need.

A spirit of service in the community has become as much a part of the University of Kentucky Athletics Department's culture as excellence in competition. Each year, Wildcat student-athletes spend upwards of 4,000 recorded hours volunteering. They do it in spite of balancing the demands that come with participating and succeeding in high-level college sports while pursuing an education at a world-class institution, not allowing

packed schedules to interfere with making an impact on those that surround them.

The farthest reaches of Kentucky's community service efforts last year took a total of 14 Wildcats abroad on two separate trips. Will Bushamuka (men's tennis), Tate Barney (women's soccer), Sarah Shipley (women's golf), Kaz Brown (volleyball), Abbey Cheek (softball), Sidney Dukes (gymnastics), David Cline (track and field), Brett Marshall (baseball), Billy Azzinaro (rifle), Ann Davies (swimming and diving) and Alyssa Rice (women's basketball) went to Panama, while C.J. Conrad, Denzil Ware and Jordan Bonner from the UK football team traveled to the Dominican Republic. They all returned from these experiences with a renewed appreciation for the opportunities afforded them.

The goal of these department-sponsored trips, as well as UK Athletics' collective focus on service, is the personal enrichment of the nearly 500 student-athletes on the University of Kentucky's campus. While the most visible and immediate evidence of UK Athletics' success comes in victories and championships, the department's more lasting impact comes in preparing young people for a lifetime of achievement and to contribute meaningfully to the world around them.



**FROM PANAMA WITH LOVE** - Clockwise from top left, Billy Azzinaro (rifle), Ann Davies (swimming and diving), Brett Marshall (baseball), Alyssa Rice (women's basketball) and Will Bushamuka (men's tennis) were among 11 Wildcats who traveled to Panama for a service trip in summer 2017.

## COURTNEY LOVE

# A M A N O F A C T I O N

Given his background, it would be difficult to blame Courtney Love for looking out for himself. Instead, the Kentucky football linebacker took inspiration from a difficult childhood and turned it into a lifetime commitment to helping others overcome the same kind of obstacles Love has faced.

Love, who received his degree in community and leadership development before his senior season and will be a graduate assistant at his alma mater starting with the 2018 season, was living with his mother at age 8. Realizing a difficult relationship with her made living with his father, Cory, his best chance at a stable life, Courtney ran away from home. Cory provided the discipline young Courtney needed, but went to prison for two years. Though Cory, a former Marine, would eventually go on to own a successful industrial cleaning business, Courtney was left in the care of his grandmother and great-grandmother.

In spite of everything he faced, Courtney grew into a football star and standout student, earning a scholarship to play at Nebraska before transferring to Kentucky. At UK, Courtney immediately established himself as a leader in both the locker room and the community. He volunteered in support of a number of causes, none dearer to his heart than Amachi Central Kentucky. Amachi seeks to pair caring, positive adults with children who have one or both parents in prison, which is how Courtney met Antonio McKinney. The two have become inseparable, with Antonio thriving as he learns from Courtney's example.

Courtney Love has lived through a lot. Now he lives to show others they can too.



Courtney Love doesn't serve for the sake of recognition, but recognition has come anyway. In December, he was named the winner of the 2017 Wuerffel Trophy, an award that honors college football's top community servant.





# 2017-18 IN

# REVIEW



The following UK Elite teams were honored throughout the 2017-18 athletic year:

- 1978 Men's Basketball Team
- 2006-08 Football Teams
- 1988 Baseball Team
- 1987 and 1988 Volleyball Teams
- 1988 Men's Tennis Team
- 1986 and 1988 Women's Golf Teams

## KENTUCKY ATHLETICS WELCOMES HOME 10 ELITE TEAMS OF THE PAST



The 1978 men's basketball national championship team (top), 2006-2008 football bowl teams (left) and 1988 baseball team (right) were among the groups returning to campus for their elite team reunions last season.



The goal of the Kentucky Athletics Department is to establish itself as elite in all facets. Starting with the 2017-18 season, UK now honors teams that have attained elite status.

UK Athletics officially honored 10 teams across six programs in the inaugural season of the elite team reunions, as selected by a reunion committee specifically tasked with

selecting deserving teams. Over the course of the 2017-18 season, the 2006-08 Kentucky football teams, the 1978 men's basketball team, the 1988 baseball team, the 1987 and '88 volleyball teams, the 1988 men's tennis team, and the 1986 and '88 women's golf teams were honored, with all-time great players and coaches returning to receive well-deserved recognition.



## UK INDUCTS 2017 HALL OF FAME CLASS



UK's six-member 2017 Hall of Fame class featured star athletes from five sports, as well as longtime broadcaster Ralph Hacker. Only Randall Cobb was unable to attend, but his father proudly stood in his place.

The University of Kentucky Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2017 was an impressive one. Randall Cobb (football), Collin Cowgill (baseball), Ralph Hacker (broadcaster), Sherry Hoover Bordner (cross country/indoor track/outdoor track), Sarah Rumely (volleyball) and John Wall (men's basketball) officially joined the ranks of Wildcat greats in the Hall of Fame with a private induction ceremony. The evening was highlighted by a moving speech in which Wall paid tribute to his mother and donned a UK jersey once again to reprise the signature dance move he used to introduce himself to UK fans at Big Blue Madness nearly a decade ago.

The UK Athletics Hall of Fame was started in 2005 to recognize and honor persons whose participation and achievements enriched and strengthened the university's athletics program. The charter class included 88 individuals who had previously had their jersey retired by UK.

There is a five-year waiting period after leaving UK to be eligible for inclusion into the Hall of Fame. A committee consisting of Hall of Famers, media members, campus representatives and current coaches and administrators elects new inductees each year.



The new online home of the UK Athletics Hall of Fame is [UKathletics.com/HallofFame](http://UKathletics.com/HallofFame).

# BIG BLUE MADNESS

## DRAKE VISIT, FAMILY THEME HIGHLIGHT BIG BLUE MADNESS



It's a night of unmatched hype, but somehow Big Blue Madness never disappoints. The 2017 edition of the annual first open practice for the Kentucky men's and women's basketball teams was as much of a spectacle as ever – and probably even more so. There were pyrotechnics, dancing, bright lights and, of course, some basketball.

The men's and women's basketball teams arrived in style with a Blue Carpet event before proceeding inside Rupp Arena for the show. Matthew Mitchell once again delivered the goods with a medley of dance moves, the last coming as he was joined by his team at midcourt.

The theme of the night for the men's team was family, with the latest group of Wildcats being welcomed by a video featuring many notable alumni and eventually by more alumni with an in-person meet-and-greet. An adopted member of the family – Drake – was a surprise guest.



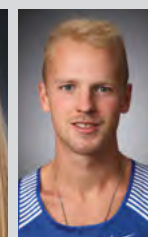
## KUNC, THOMSON NAMED SEC CROSS COUNTRY SCHOLAR-ATHLETES OF YEAR

Katy Kunc and Jacob Thomson have long been standouts for the Kentucky track and field and cross country team. How fitting, then, that the two seniors were honored together, sweeping Southeastern Conference Cross Country Scholar Athlete of the Year awards in the fall.

In the spring, Kunc and Thomson also graduated, with Thomson earning degrees in accounting and finance and Kunc in marketing and economics. Both were also First-Team All-SEC honorees in cross country as seniors – Thomson for the third



Katy Kunc



Jacob Thomson

straight year and Kunc for the second – while Thomson was a First-Team All-American in the outdoor 10k and indoor 5k and Kunc a Second-Team All-American in the 3k steeplechase.



# UK FOOTBALL SIGNING DAY



## DECEMBER FRENZY LEADS FOOTBALL TO EARLY SIGNING HAUL

The month of December had Mark Stoops dotting the South and Midwest with stops along the recruiting trail. Over the course of a few weeks, the Kentucky head coach made in-home visits with upwards of two dozen recruits, all in an effort to lock them up for the first-ever early signing period.

When you combine that travel with intervening phone calls, official visits, and preparations for the Franklin American Mortgage Music City Bowl, it's no wonder he needed some occasional reminders about his travel itinerary.

"The pilots, sometimes I would just ask them, 'Where am I landing?'" Stoops said.

Fortunately, his pilots knew where they were going and his assistant coaches were always there waiting to pick him up. With the entire operation working in concert, UK signed 20 highly touted prospects. Four more joined in February to complete the 2018 class.

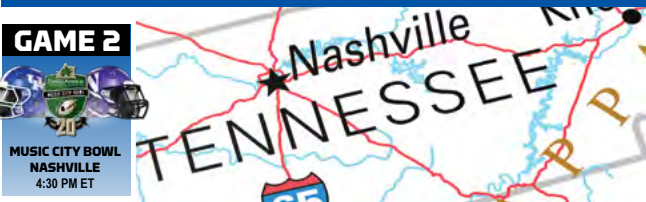
### CLASS OF 2018 SIGNEES

Name	Pos.	Ht/Wt	Class
Marvin Alexander Jr.	WR	6-2/175	Fr-HS
Brenden Bates	TE	6-5/240	Fr-HS
Jamari Brown	DB	6-2/180	Fr-HS
Allen Dailey*	WR	6-3/195	Fr-HS
Max Duffy	P	6-1/200	So-TR
Stanley Garner	DB	6-2/180	Fr-HS
Davaon Hawkins	DL	6-4/275	Fr-HS
Akeem Hayes	WR	5-10/170	Fr-HS
Kenneth Horsey	OL	6-3/330	Fr-HS
Darian Kinnard	OL	6-7/330	Fr-HS
Nick Lewis*	OT	6-9/350	Fr-HS
Jerquavion Mahone	DL	6-3/300	Fr-HS
Marquan McCall	DL	6-3/350	Fr-HS
Chris Oats*	LB	6-5/220	Fr-HS
Bryce Oliver	WR	6-3/200	Fr-HS
Ashtan Pierre	LB	6-2/200	Fr-HS
Chance Poore	K	6-3/200	Fr-HS
Chris Rodriguez	RB	6-0/220	Fr-HS
Kavosiey Smoke*	RB	5-10/225	Fr-HS
Deandre Square	LB	6-1/205	Fr-HS
Keaton Upshaw	TE	6-6/240	Fr-HS
Domonique Williams	DB	5-10/180	Jr-JC
Quintin Wilson	C	6-3/320	Fr-H
Terry Wilson Jr.	QB	6-3/205	So-JC

\*February Signee



**GAME 1**  
**ALL CATS, ALL DAY** –The attention of the Big Blue Nation was equally divided on Dec. 29 as the men's basketball team hosted Louisville and the football team played in the Franklin American Mortgage Music City Bowl.



## FANS DO "DOUBLE DUTY" TO WATCH CATS PLAY IN BOWL GAME, MEN'S BASKETBALL RIVALRY GAME

Either game on its own would have been a big event for the Big Blue Nation. Instead, Kentucky fans had to split their support between two of the biggest games of the year taking place more than 200 miles and just a few hours apart. Even so – thanks to some effective planning and the wonders of cable television – the Wildcats were well represented both at home and in Nashville.

The day began in Rupp Arena, where the Kentucky men's basketball team was to host its annual rivalry showdown with Louisville. There, a packed house cheered nearly every minute of a dominant 90-61 victory over the rival Cardinals in which Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had his coming-out party as John Calipari's next star point guard.

In Nashville, the UK-UofL game served as ideal pregame entertainment before the Wildcats made their second consecutive bowl appearance at the Franklin American Mortgage Music City Bowl. The Cats' valiant comeback bid would fall short against a top-20 ranked Northwestern squad, but not for a lack of support from a large contingent of blue-clad fans.

**ESPNU COLLEGE GAMEDAY**  
**GAMEDAY RETURNS TO RUPP ARENA**

Appearing in front of a large, mostly blue and white-clad Rupp Arena crowd, the ESPN College GameDay crew of Rece Davis, Jay Bilas, Jay Williams and Seth Greenberg aired its popular game-day show ahead of the UK-Florida game last January.

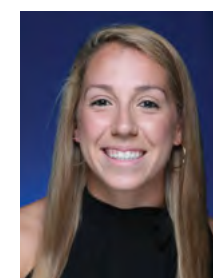
UK has been a frequent featured school on ESPN College GameDay, hosting the show seven times and appearing 15 times overall – the second-most of any school.

## CHEERLEADING WINS 23RD NATIONAL TITLE

"Keep Climbing" is the motto Coach Jomo Thompson instilled in this year's UK cheerleading squad. And, keep climbing is exactly what the team did – all the way to the national championship. The UK cheerleaders won their 23rd national title – including their third in a row – at the Universal Cheerleaders Association competition in January in Orlando, Florida. Competing among Division IA Coed squads, the Wildcats claimed the crown with a score of 97.3 out of a possible 100 points.



## DANIELLE GALYER WINS NCAA TODAY'S TOP 10 AWARD



Former Kentucky swimmer Danielle Galyer was one of 10 exceptional former student-athletes selected as a 2017 Today's Top 10 Award winner last December. Today's Top 10 recognizes student-athletes for their accomplishments in athletics, academics and service.

Galyer, a four-year standout for the women's swimming and diving program, became Kentucky's first swimmer to win a national championship when she took the 200-yard backstroke crown at the 2016 NCAA Championships. Galyer maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA in earning degrees in psychology and political science, serving as Kentucky's SAAC president for two years before going on to law school.

## WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD TAKES THIRD AT INDOOR NCAAS, TIM DUCKWORTH WINS HEPTATHLON

The Kentucky women's track program has become a player on the national stage in recent years, but never before had the Wildcats made the podium at the NCAA Indoor Championships. That changed this winter. The Wildcats sprinted to a school-record third-place finish, led by a dazzling array of stars that included medalists Sydney McLaughlin, Jasmine Camacho-Quinn and Olivia Gruver.

While the UK women narrowly missed out on gold medals, both individually and as a team, Tim Duckworth did not. Duckworth became the first Wildcat to win individual gold since 1996 by taking the title in the heptathlon.

The women's track and field team brought home hardware from the 2018 NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships, claiming third place.

**RUPP ARENA**

**UK SIGNS NEW 15-YEAR LEASE DEAL WITH RUPP ARENA**

Rupp Arena will remain the home of Kentucky men's basketball for the foreseeable future. UK and the Lexington Center Corporation agreed to a new 15-year lease that will keep the Wildcats in their longtime home through 2033 while also laying the foundation for a coming transformation of one of the most iconic buildings in sports.

As part of the agreement, comfortable chair-back seating will be installed along the sidelines in the upper level, answering frequent feedback from fans in the area. Additionally, new club spaces will be constructed, the proceeds playing a key role in funding the installation of chair-back seating. UK will also now control multimedia rights inside Rupp Arena, helping to create a more seamless and interactive game experience for fans.





**RUN, RUN, U of K** – UK Athletics hosted the inaugural Go Big Blue 4 Miler presented by Kroger Simple Truth on a Saturday morning in April. The race began and ended at Kroger Field and took participants through various athletic facilities on south campus.

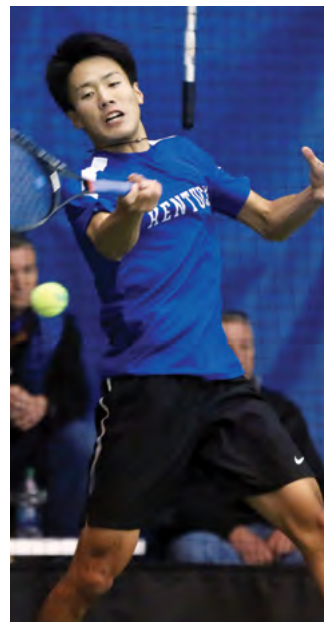


The University of Kentucky set a school record with six teams — men's and women's basketball, men's and women's golf, softball and volleyball — that received Public Recognition Awards for their Academic Progress Rate scores, the NCAA announced in May. UK also notched its 12th consecutive semester with a cumulative grade-point average of better than 3.0 in the spring.

# 3.184 GPA



The CATSPY Awards once again punctuated a memorable year in UK Athletics, with student-athletes, coaches and staff gathering to celebrate the best of the 2017-18 season. Ashley Dusek (volleyball) and Sean Hjelle (baseball) were the big winners, taking home the prestigious Miss and Mr. Wildcat awards.



Junior UK men's tennis player Ryotaro Matsumura (left) was named a 2018 ITA All-American in singles last spring while senior Mami Adachi (right) earned first-team All-SEC honors on the women's team. Matsumura and Adachi both helped lead their respective teams to 2018 NCAA Tournament appearances.

## REMEMBERING MIKE SLIVE



A titan in both the Southeastern Conference and college sports passed away this spring. Mike Slive, the visionary former SEC commissioner, died at age 77.

"His influence on the SEC was profound, as was his influence on me personally. His incredible vision, unwavering integrity and commitment to the principles of the student-athlete model continue to be an inspiration to the many he mentored in higher education," UK Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart said. "My heart breaks personally at his loss and my thoughts and prayers go out to Liz, Anna, Judd, and his beloved granddaughter, Abigail. I'm thankful for the many years I had the pleasure of working with him and will forever hold dear the smiles and memories we shared."

Slive was SEC commissioner from 2002-15, leading the conference through a period of unprecedented growth into the powerhouse it is today. The conference won seven consecutive football national champion-

ships from 2006-12 and added Missouri and Texas A&M as members in 2012. Not only did Slive orchestrate some of the most lucrative television deals in college sports history, he was also the driving force behind the launch of the SEC Network in 2014.

Slive maintained close relationships with many at the University of Kentucky, including Barnhart and men's basketball coach John Calipari. In fact, Coach Cal credits Slive in large part for his hiring at UK.

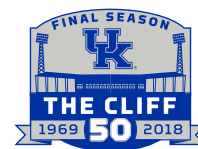
"Obviously, Dr. Lee Todd and Mitch Barnhart made the decision to hire me, but my friend, guardian and mentor Mike Slive was instrumental in me becoming the coach at Kentucky," Calipari said. "Mike was the commissioner of the SEC when I took the job at Kentucky in 2009 and he had previously been the commissioner of Conference USA while I was the coach at Memphis. Without his stamp of approval, I would not be coaching at Kentucky."

Slive will be remembered at UK and across the SEC for decades to come



**GRADUATION DAY** - Sixty-one UK student athletes graduated in May, bringing the total to 96 for the year.

## UK COMMEMORATES END OF ERA AT CLIFF HAGAN BASEBALL STADIUM



The final regular-season weekend in the 50-year history of Cliff Hagan Stadium was appropriately a packed one.

Hosting the last three games in the stadium affectionately known as "The Cliff," Kentucky celebrated Senior Day on Friday, honored the 30-year anniversary of the 1988 team on Saturday and had 50 years' worth of UK coaches throw out first pitches prior to the finale on Sunday. And after the game on Sunday, fans in attendance were invited to the field, with each able to throw a ceremonial last pitch from the mound of UK baseball's longtime home.

Best of all, the Wildcats said farewell to Cliff Hagan Stadium in style, taking two of three games from eventual College World Series participant Mississippi State.



**FINAL COUNTDOWN** – A school-record 91,511 fans attended home games in the final season at Cliff Hagan Stadium, including the top eight regular-season crowds in school history.

## NEW UK BASEBALL STADIUM NEARS COMPLETION

As the Kentucky baseball team played the final season in Cliff Hagan Stadium, construction crews were hard at work getting the Wildcats' new home ready for its grand opening.

The cost of the stadium, which will give UK baseball a state-of-the-art home on par with its peers in the Southeastern Conference, will be \$49 million. The new stadium – which is yet to be named – will be located off Alumni Drive between the new Kentucky Football Training Facility and

the Wendell and Vickie Bell Soccer Complex, adding to the cluster of UK Athletics facilities in the area.

The stadium will feature permanent seating for nearly 2,500 fans with additional space on grass berms to accommodate a total of more than 4,000 fans for regular-season games. Beyond the outfield wall, temporary bleachers can be installed for NCAA Tournament games to bring the seating capacity to more than 7,000. Fan amenities also will include suites and a new club area.



## REMEMBERING C.M. NEWTON



**C.M.** Newton, former student-athlete and director of athletics at the University of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He was 88.

"C.M. Newton is a giant in the history of the University of Kentucky, the Southeastern Conference and in the sport of basketball," said current UK Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart. "As a student-athlete, he was a national champion basketball player and star baseball pitcher. He returned to his alma mater when he was needed most and provided stability, leadership and growth for UK Athletics for more than a decade. His coaching accomplishments and honors at Transylvania, Alabama and Vanderbilt speak for themselves.

"His contributions to the sport of basketball continue to this day. As chairman of the NCAA rules committee, he introduced the shot clock and the 3-point shot. For decades, he worked tirelessly to promote international basketball and was well-rewarded by his election to the Naismith Hall of Fame.

"Most of all is the impact he had on thousands of people as a coach, mentor and friend. He understood what it meant to be a servant-leader and will be dearly missed."

A native of Rockwood, Tennessee, Charles Martin Newton grew up in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. His collegiate career began at Kentucky, where he was a basketball forward and baseball pitcher from 1948-51. He was a letterman on Coach Adolph Rupp's 1951 national champion basketball team and eventually went on to pitch in the minor leagues for the New York Yankees.

Newton served as athletics director at UK from 1989-2000. His term as AD was marked by the addition of three sports – men's and women's soccer and softball – expansion of facilities and growth in revenues in response to the increasing financial pressures of college athletics.

Facility growth during Newton's term included expansion of the football stadium (now known as Kroger Field, with the playing surface named C.M. Newton Grounds in his honor), expansion of the baseball stadium, acquisition of a golf course, construction of the soccer/softball complex, a new tennis stadium and construction of the Nutter Field House.

Arriving at UK during a troubled time for the men's basketball team, Newton's hiring of Rick Pitino rejuvenated the program, eventually leading to a national championship in 1996 and then another NCAA title in 1998 under Orlando "Tubby" Smith. Newton's hiring of Smith and Bernadette Mattox marked the first two African-American head coaches for UK men's and women's basketball.



# 2018-19 BUDGET

# MANAGING OUR VALUABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES WISELY

**S**tewardship is one of Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart's five core values in his leadership of UK Athletics. It is no coincidence that the athletics department takes seriously the responsible management of its financial resources.

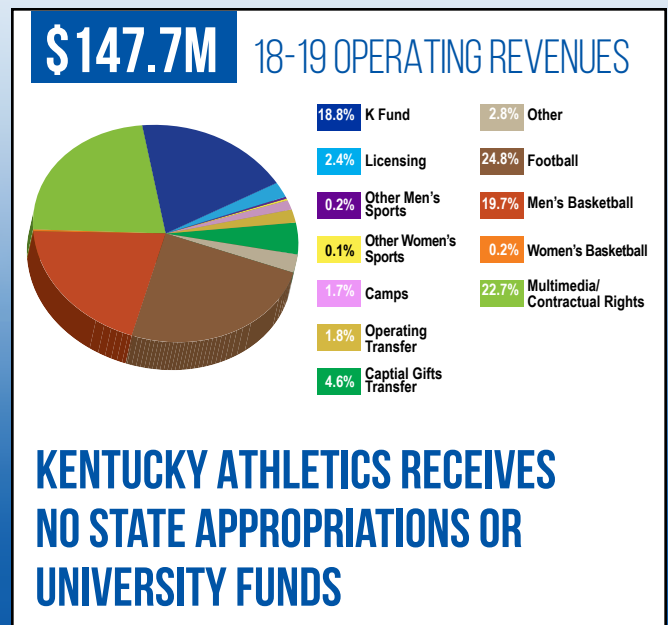
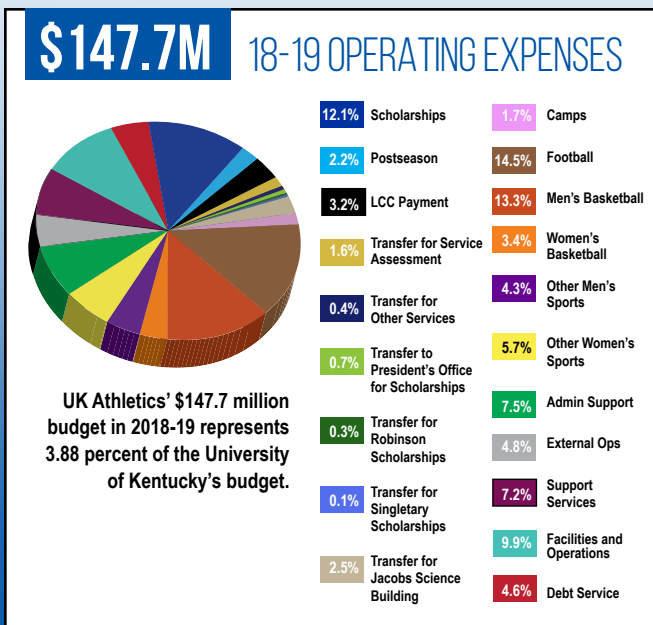
Once again, UK Athletics is proud to operate with a balanced budget, with projected revenues and expenses for the 2018-19 fiscal year coming in at an identical \$147.7 million. That marks an increase of approximately \$10.9 million from 2017-18, fueled in large part by increasing salary and scholarship costs and a new federal income tax.

In spite of the escalating expenses associated with running an athletics department that competes at the highest level nationally and in the Southeastern Conference, UK Athletics remains firm in its commitment to strident partnership with the university it represents. In addition to supporting the academic mission of the university by serving as UK's "front porch," UK Athletics' budget provides for direct financial support. Not only is UK Athletics a

rare athletics department that operates self-sufficiently and with the help of no state or university funds, it also consistently invests in the university by paying the full in-state and out-of-state tuition rates for all 330 of its scholarships for student-athletes, trainers, managers and interns.

Combining contributions toward university scholarships and the UK Marching band and an annual University Service Assessment Fee, UK Athletics will directly transfer nearly \$8.3 million to the university. The most visible sign of UK Athletics' commitment to UK's academic mission is the Don & Cathy Jacobs Science Building, for which UK Athletics contributes \$3.7 million annually in debt service payments and will fund in total nearly two-thirds of the \$100-plus million building. The 2018-19 fiscal year will also mark the first in which UK students will no longer be charged an athletics fee as part of their tuition, completing a process by which the fee has been phased out in recent years.

Excellence in competition is of paramount importance to the University of Kentucky Athletics Department, but its mission goes well beyond that.





These are initial renderings for a planned renovation of Memorial Coliseum that will secure the future of the facility while preserving its storied past.



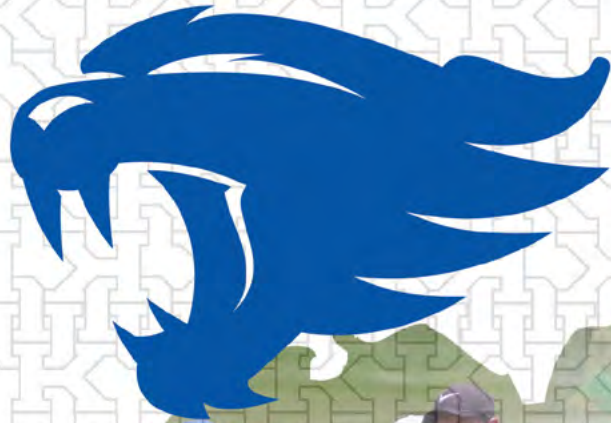
# INVESTING IN TRADITION

**M**emorial Coliseum is a venue of unparalleled tradition. Not only was it the longtime home of Kentucky men's basketball and the place where Adolph Rupp coached 21 seasons, it also pays tribute to Kentuckians who have given their lives serving their country. Today, UK Athletics has grand plans to honor that tradition and reinvent Memorial, now home to UK's volleyball, women's basketball and gymnastics teams.



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