

University Athletics Committee Report, June 16, 2021

Sports Roundup

- It is great to be back with you after the most unusual overlap time in college athletics history – not just the usual overlap of winter and spring sports, which is our busiest time of year already – but the addition of fall sports on top of all that.
- Having all our sports programs in action at the same time produced some moments of great joy – including a six-week period highlighted by national championships from our rifle and volleyball teams.
- However, when we were last together in February, it was our women’s swimming and diving program that was on stage. Our women’s swim team was in Athens and the divers were in Columbia, Missouri, for the Southeastern Conference Championships. They finished the week by winning their first SEC championship in school history.
 - Accomplishing something for the first time is always a unique occasion and the Wildcats, led by SEC Coach of the Year Lars Jorgensen, enjoyed a special celebration after winning the title.
- Three weeks later, it was our rifle team taking the spotlight to end a journey that took a year and a half. As you remember, in March of 2020, the pandemic stopped the No. 1-ranked Wildcats just two days away from a likely national championship that was taking place in our own Memorial Coliseum. The Wildcats, however, turned deep disappointment into a deeper determination. This year Coach Harry Mullins and the team would not be denied.
- Led by Mary Tucker and Will Shaner, the Wildcats won our third national championship in the last decade. Mary won every shooting category and was named National Athlete of the Year. Both Mary and Will have earned places on the United States Olympic Team and will represent us in Tokyo.
- For the volleyball team, it was an eight-month journey of practice, a regular season interrupted by an 11-week break between competition, and a totally different structure for the NCAA Tournament. They brought the Big Blue Nation together for two weeks of late-night TV and concluded with not only UK’s, but the SEC’s first national championship in volleyball. Craig Skinner was named National Coach of the Year, Madison Lilley was named National Player of the Year and Lilley, Avery Skinner and Alli Stumler were first-team All-Americans.
- While all that was going on, several other teams enjoyed NCAA success as well.
 - Women’s swimming moved on to the NCAA Championships, where they made their best finish ever in 11th place. The men’s team finished in the nation’s top 30 at that championship.
 - Women’s golf reached the national finals for the first time in 29 years and finished 18th.

- Softball made its 12th straight NCAA Tournament appearance, winning our home regional to advance to the Super Regionals.
- Men's soccer resumed its season and was selected for the NCAA Tournament, knocking off an undefeated New Hampshire team en route to the NCAA Sweet 16.
- Despite fielding a relatively young team after major graduation losses from a year ago, the gymnastics team earned a bid to the NCAA Regional and shows great promise for the future.
- The women's basketball team and the men's and women's tennis teams advanced to the second rounds of their NCAA tourneys.
 - Women's basketball was led by All-American Rhyne Howard, who was a finalist for several National Player of the Year awards.
 - Men's tennis was highlighted by the play of Liam Draxl, who earned the No. 1 ranking in America and was the third Wildcat this year to be named National Athlete of the Year in his or her sport.
- The men's track team finished 14th at the NCAA Indoor Championships – their best finish in more than a quarter-century – and their 15th place finish last weekend at the outdoor championships is the best in seven years.
- The women's track team was 13th at the NCAA Indoors, highlighted by Abby Steiner, who won the gold medal in the 200-meter dash, tied the NCAA record, and ran the fifth-fastest time in world history.
- Women's track finished 21st last weekend at the NCAA Outdoor Meet, their seventh-straight year in the top 25.
- At the completion of the winter sports season, we rank No. 5 nationally in the Directors' Cup all-sports standings. The spring sports will be added, and the final standings issued in early July.
- Our football team returned to campus last week and is beginning summer workouts. The coaching staff is back on the recruiting trail after recruiting activities were reinstated for all sports on June 1.
- Coach Calipari has been very busy this offseason, with the return of Orlando Antigua and the addition of Ron Coleman to his coaching staff. We have also added several transfers who have had proven success at their previous schools and will help us immediately.

Remembering Terrence Clarke

- Terrence Clarke, who was a freshman on this year's team, died in an automobile accident April 22. Clarke had declared for the NBA Draft in March and was training in Los Angeles at the time of the accident.
 - "We were stunned by the sudden, tragic loss of Terrence Clarke," said Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart. "Although he had been with us a relatively

short time, his upbeat, positive spirit made a tremendous impact on his teammates and coaches. He was a young man full of life and full of promise. We have hurt and grieved with those who knew and loved him.

“I want to express a special thanks for the basketball program for what they’ve done to honor Terrence. Coach Calipari flew to California to be with his family and the players put together a heartfelt candlelight service. I greatly appreciate Coach Cal, the staff and players for the way they have supported Terrence’s family.”

Academics

- Our strong trend of academic news continued last month with an overall 3.259 composite grade-point average for our student-athletes, our 18th-straight semester of at least 3.0.
- 93 student-athletes graduated in May, including 12 who completed master’s degrees. Including the December commencement, UK Athletics had 115 graduates for the 2020-21 school year.
- The SEC Academic Honor Roll for winter sports came out, and UK had 72 on the list, tying for the third-most in the conference. UK was second on the SEC Fall Sports Honor Roll with 100. The spring sports honor roll has not been announced.
- Two Wildcats have received scholarships from the NCAA ...
 - Asia Seidt of women’s swimming was one of only two national recipients (one female, one male) of the NCAA Walter Byers Graduate Scholarship for combining the best elements of mind and body to achieve national distinction for their achievements and to be future leaders in their chosen field of career service. Asia is working on her doctorate in physical therapy at UK.
 - Chase Lane of men’s swimming was awarded an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship for student-athletes who excel academically and athletically. He will begin his graduate work in physical therapy in the fall.

More News About the Wildcats

- Twenty-four student-athletes were inducted into our Frank G. Ham Society of Character. The Society of Character recognizes superior commitment to academics, athletics, community service and career preparation.
- For the second year in a row, the CATSPY Awards were held virtually. A total of 78 individuals and five teams were recognized at the 19th annual celebration. Josh Paschal and Landon Young were named Mr. Wildcat while Madison Lilley, Akvile Parazinskaite, Avery Skinner and Abby Steiner were named Miss Wildcat.
- Six Wildcat greats will be named to the UK Athletics Hall of Fame and will be honored at a football weekend this fall.

- Jim Madaleno, our Executive Associate AD for Sports Medicine, has served all year on the SEC's Medical Guidance Task Force that has guided the league through the pandemic. Madaleno and the other members of the task force were given the SEC's Michael Slive Distinguished Service Award for exemplary service to the conference.
- Our new partnership with WLEX TV continues to work well. WLEX's "BBN Tonight" show has gotten outstanding ratings and gives us exclusive coverage on a daily basis.
- Our cheerleading and dance teams competed in the national championships in April. The dance teams got a pair of second-place finishes, their highest ever, and the cheerleaders placed third.
- Several current and former UK student-athletes will be in Olympic Trials for the United States and international teams during the next month as athletes are selected for the Tokyo Games.