

## **Athletics Report for Board of Trustees Meeting, June 16**

### **Winter Sports Report**

- All nine of our winter sports teams competed in the postseason, led by the rifle team winning another national championship – the second year in a row, third time since 2018 and fourth in the last decade by Harry Mullins and his team.
- Women's track and field placed third at the NCAA indoor meet and we also want to recognize the SEC Tournament title won by women's basketball, first time that has been accomplished in 40 years.
- There were numerous standout individual achievements by the winter athletes. There were so many that it would take a long time to list them all but do want to recognize a few...
  - Will Shaner, who was the national smallbore champion in leading rifle to the team title
  - Oscar Tshiebwe, the unanimous National Player of the Year in men's basketball
  - Rhyne Howard, the No. 1 pick in the WNBA Draft, who already is making a big impact in that league
  - Abby Steiner was named the National Indoor Track Athlete of the Year after winning the NCAA 200-meter dash, setting the American indoor record and the second-fastest indoor 200 meters in world history.
  - Abby is one of three Wildcats who were named the SEC Scholar-Athlete of the Year in her sport, along with Renee Abernathy in softball and Riley Gaines from swimming. In addition, Riley is the SEC Community Service Leader of the Year among all female athletes in the league and was honored at the SEC Spring Meetings.
  - We also had a fourth Wildcat earn the Scholar-Athlete of the Year in his conference, as Mitchell Nelson won that honor in the Great America Rifle Conference.

### **Spring Sports Report**

- There are a lot of highlights in spring sports as well ...
  - Led by All-Americans Liam Draxl and Gabriel Diallo, men's tennis had its best postseason ever, finishing runner-up at the NCAA Championships.
  - The bat-and-ball teams each had an All-American. Shortstop Erin Coffel led softball to another trip to the NCAA Regionals. The baseball team sustained an incredible run of injuries, but with All-America reliever Tyler Guilfoil pitching lights out down the stretch, the Wildcats made a run to the SEC Tournament semifinals.

- The men's and women's golf teams played in the NCAA Regionals, with the women highlighting the regular season with school records for lowest round and lowest tournament score.
- We wrapped up the athletic year last weekend in Oregon, watching our track and field teams earn two gold medals, one silver and three bronze, with our women's team finishing third in the team competition.
  - Abby Steiner was the pacesetter, setting the NCAA Championship record in the 200 meters. She topped the meet by running an incredible third leg on the 4x400 relay, coming from 25 meters behind to take the lead and give the baton to Alexis Holmes, who took it home for the gold medal.
  - All totaled this year, Abby won three NCAA gold medals, two silver and three bronze, set four NCAA records, set an American record and was the SEC Scholar-Athlete of the Year for both indoor and outdoor track.
- The Directors' Cup national all-sports standings were updated and released this morning. Among the 358 Division I schools, Kentucky is currently seventh in the nation, and No. 2 in the SEC. When the final standings are updated after the baseball tournament, we anticipate a ninth-place national finish, which would be the highest in school history, breaking the school-record 10<sup>th</sup>-place finish in 2016-17.

## **Academics**

- While these accomplishments were going on, our student-athletes continue to excel in the classroom.
  - Last month at Commencement, we had 114 student-athletes graduate – most ever in UK Athletics -- and along with the 21 from December, gave us 135 for this academic year.
  - The next week, our student-athletes compiled a 3.284 GPA for the spring semester – the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive semester, 10 straight years – that we have been above 3.0.
  - 74 of our athletes were on the SEC Winter Sports Academic Honor Roll, third-most in the league. The spring sports honor roll has yet to be announced.
  - This week, the NCAA Academic Progress Rates were released, showing that all of UK's teams exceeded the mandated score. In addition, 16 of UK's 20 teams exceeded the national average among public universities.

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Title IX**

- June 23 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Title IX legislation that had a profound effect on the growth of women's sports.

- UK Athletics is having a year-long celebration of Title IX, which began February 2, which was “National Women and Girls in Sports Day.” All of our female athletes were introduced at halftime of the basketball game that night at Rupp Arena and our special 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary video was presented.
- UK Athletics celebrated Women’s History Month in March, honoring the women who played varsity athletics in the early 1900s.
- In celebration of Mother’s Day, UK Athletics honored many of the department staff super moms who were elite athletes in their playing days with a fun video featuring their children.
- UK Athletics also has selected a Title IX 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Team, featuring the 50 greatest female Wildcats of the Title IX era. Five honorees are being announced each night on the BBN Tonight show.

### **Off the Field**

- In March, 17 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.
- In April, for the first time since 2019, we were able to have the annual CATSPY Awards in person. A total of 61 individuals and nine teams were recognized at the 20<sup>th</sup> annual celebration. Luke Fortner, Josh Paschal, Will Levis and Will Shaner were named Mr. Wildcat while Riley Gaines, Rhyne Howard, Kayla Kowalik, Alli Stumler and Abby Steiner were named Miss Wildcat.
- Also in April, UK played host to its first concert in Kroger Field. A concert-capacity crowd of more than 40,000 fans enjoyed Chris Stapleton, Willie Nelson and Sheryl Crow. The concert also served as a benefit for the Stapleton Foundation, the “Outlaw State of Kind,” and more than \$1 million was raised for various charitable endeavors, including the UK Children’s Hospital.
- In May, it was announced that Mitch Barnhart and Sue Feamster were named to the (state of) Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony will be held in August in Louisville.
- In May, it was also announced that Mitch Barnhart will receive the John L. Toner Award from the National Football Foundation for excellence in athletics administration. The award will be presented in December in Las Vegas.
- In the last three weeks, the Kentucky High School Athletic Association has conducted state championships in our facilities in baseball, softball, tennis and track and field. This is important for our department and the University as a whole as we recruit students and athletes to UK and strengthen ties to the flagship educational institution of the Commonwealth. It’s also important to the city of Lexington for us to bring people to our hotels, restaurants, shops and other businesses.