

Minutes of the University Athletics Committee  
University of Kentucky  
Thursday, February 22, 2024

The University Athletics Committee of the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees met on Thursday, February 22, 2024, in the Gatton Student Center, Harris Ballroom.

I. Meeting Opened

Trustee David Melanson, chair of the University Athletics Committee, called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. Chair Melanson asked Katie Hardwick to call the roll.

II. Roll Call

The following members of the University Athletics Committee were present: Board Members Todd Case, David Melanson, Frank Shoop and Rachel Webb; Community Advisory Members Vickie Bell and Wilbur Hackett; and Faculty Athletics Representative Joe Fink. Board member Claude A. "Skip" Berry, III, attended via Zoom.

III. Chairs Report

Chair Melanson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 14, 2023, meeting. Trustee Webb moved approval of the minutes, and Trustee Case seconded the motion. The motion carried without dissent.

Chair Melanson then introduced Director Barnhart for his report.

IV. Athletics Director's Report

Director Barnhart began his report with an update on the fall sports teams.

- The volleyball team posted its seventh straight Southeastern Conference (SEC) Championship with a 17-1 league record.
  - The Wildcats advanced to the Sweet 16 of the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Tournament and had an overall record of 21-8.
  - Reagan Rutherford and Emma Grome were named All-America. Craig Skinner was voted SEC Co-Coach of the Year.
- The football team accomplished multiple milestones.
  - The Wildcats finished the regular season with a win at No. 9-ranked Louisville to retain possession of the Governor's Cup. UK was named National Team of the Week for that victory.
  - This was the fourth straight season that UK has defeated at least two ranked opponents, the longest streak in school history.
  - Coach Mark Stoops now has 13 wins against ranked opponents, more than any coach in school history.

- Coach Stoops also improved his UK record for total victories to 73. He has completed 11 seasons at UK and is sixth in the nation in longevity among current coaches in the NCAA Bowl Subdivision.
  - Kentucky extended its bowl streak to eight consecutive seasons by playing in the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl. It is worth noting that eight straight bowls is the eighth-longest active streak in the nation among the 133 Bowl Subdivision teams.
  - Four Wildcats earned All-America and seven were named All-SEC. All but one of those players returns for next season.
  - Speaking of next season, spring practice begins in March. Football will have the spring game in April.
  - The end of the 2023 season also closed the football career of our own Wilbur Hackett, one of the pioneers of integration of SEC football and the first African American team captain in any sport in SEC history. Wilbur had a long and successful run as an SEC game official, on the field and in the replay booth. The Athletics Department congratulates him as he transitions from official to full-time fan.
- Men's soccer went undefeated in the last seven regular-season games to earn a spot in the NCAA Tournament.
    - UK defeated James Madison in the opening round of the tournament.
    - Max Miller was named All-Southeast Region and all-conference.
  - Women's soccer made significant progress in its second season under head coach Troy Fabiano. The Wildcats had a 9-4 record with six ties.
    - Jordyn Rhodes set the school record for goals scored and was named first-team All-SEC while Grace Phillpotts was second-team All-SEC.

Director Barnhart continued his report with an update on winter sports teams.

- Rifle has the conference and NCAA championships in the coming weeks. UK will be the No. 4 seed in the NCAA event.
- Gymnastics is in the midst of an outstanding season. Coach Tim Garrison's Wildcats rank sixth in the nation, are 7-2 overall and tied for first in the SEC with a 4-1 league mark.
- Men's and women's swimming are at the SEC championships this week.
- UK's men's and women's track teams begin the SEC Indoor Championships on Friday, with the NCAA championships scheduled in two weeks. The UK men are ranked No. 11 in the nation.
- Men's basketball is 18-7 overall and 8-4 in the SEC. The Wildcats, ranked No. 17 in the nation, have battled injuries all season and are trying to get the full roster back together heading into the stretch run.
- Women's basketball is coming off a win over Florida as the team enters tonight's game at Mississippi State.

Director Barnhart reported that spring sports have begun their regular-season action and reported some highlights including:

- Women's golf is coming off a second-place finish at its most recent tournament. Two Wildcats, Jensen Castle and Laney Frye, have qualified for the prestigious Augusta National Women's Amateur, which will be played in April.
- Men's golf is showing progress under new coach Gator Todd and looking to continue that trend going into the SEC Tournament in April.
- Men's tennis is ranked No. 11 in the nation. They're off to another good start with a 7-2 record going into yesterday's matches, including wins over a couple of top-10 teams, Virginia and Harvard.
- Under the guidance of new coach Shelly Jaudon, the women's tennis team is 6-3 on the season.
- Sparked by two wins over No. 3-ranked Stanford, Softball won its season-opening tournament. Having played a national schedule the first two weeks, the Wildcats have a 6-2 record and are ranked No. 15.
- Baseball is 4-0 and swept its opening weekend with three wins over South Carolina Upstate, a team that is the preseason favorite to win the Big South Conference. The Wildcats have jumped into the top-25 rankings.
- Our newest team, STUNT, is now in its third season and has a 4-2 record. STUNT has been classified as an emerging sport by the NCAA, the next step to becoming a fully sanctioned sport. In April, UK will host a national championship event for the Division I schools that play STUNT.

Director Barnhard added that seven of UK's winter and spring sports are currently ranked in the top 25 in the nation.

In November, it was announced that UK student-athletes tied the school record in the NCAA Graduation Success Rate (GSR). UK has broken or tied the GSR school record every year since the NCAA began measuring that statistic in 2005. This year's score of 92 percent is above the national average. Including the 2023 December commencement and last spring's graduation, a school record of 167 Wildcat student-athletes earned degrees and certifications during the 2023 calendar year. The total of 167 included 21 master's degrees.

UK Athletics combined for a composite grade point average (GPA) of 3.335 in the fall semester. That continued the University's streak of 23 consecutive semesters with a department-wide GPA of 3.0 or higher. Four hundred and forty-nine Wildcats achieved a GPA of 3.0 or higher for the fall semester, including 140 Cats who reached 4.0 for the semester. The SEC Fall Sports Academic Honor Roll has been announced and UK had 84 student-athletes represented.

In addition to the department's performance in academics, a large part of the Student-Athlete Experience Division, "The Kentucky Road", involves career preparation. During the last month, they have had educational events for financial literacy, resume preparation, and interview preparation and practice.

Earlier this month, they held the annual “Career Combine,” as 169 student-athletes met with 40 employers and 14 campus academic graduate programs to explore post-undergraduate opportunities. The department has also initiated the “Pro Career Institute,” a sponsored program matching student-athletes with internship opportunities both externally in the public and internally with UK Athletics. Twenty-two student-athletes have participated over the last three semesters.

Fifteen student-athletes were inducted into the Frank G. Ham Society of Character. To be inducted, a student-athlete must be a junior or higher in academic standing and show an extraordinary commitment to academic excellence, athletic participation, personal development, career preparation and serving as a role model.

UK’s student-athletes continue to be active in the community. J.J. Weaver of football, Reagan Rutherford of volleyball and Tallulah Miller of women’s soccer were named to the SEC Community Service Teams for their sports. It’s also worth noting that Miller has been elected vice-chair of the SEC Student-Athlete Advisory Committee for 2024 and that Eli Cox from football is chair of the SEC Leadership Council for a second year.

During the fall, Athletics celebrated Hall of Fame Weekend, recognizing the 2023 class of the UK Athletics Hall of Fame, featuring Robin Ewing-Bodem of gymnastics, Chris Chenault of football, Danielle Galyer Day from swimming, Dick Parsons of baseball and basketball, Rajon Rondo of basketball and Ryan Strieby of baseball.

In January, they held a reunion for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1984 men’s basketball Final Four team. Director Barnhart added, “The team had not been together in quite a while, so it was a joy to bring them back to relive their successes.”

Also in January, it was announced that Tim Couch had been elected to the College Football Hall of Fame. “That is a huge honor. We have had a news conference with Tim, we will honor him at a game during the season, and we will be there in December when he is officially inducted into Hall of Fame.”

Director Barnhart continued with facility updates.

The new Jim Green Track and Field Center has opened, a facility that keeps UK on the cutting edge for training nationally competitive track and field teams. “The dedication ceremony in December was a lot of fun. A large contingent of Jim’s teammates, classmates, friends and family turned out for the event, which was capped by a special surprise – the Green family presented a donation to UK Athletics.

Joe and Ambassador Kelly Craft, who gave the founding gift for the facility, were in attendance and the Ambassador and Jim Green took the official first lap on the track. In addition to showing off the building, we also unveiled a statue of Jim that graces the entrance of the facility.

The Memorial Coliseum renovation continues. The goal is to have the competition spaces ready in August when volleyball season begins, followed by women's basketball, gymnastics and STUNT as the school year continues. There will be ongoing construction of additional spaces, with the goal of full completion in 2025. Director Barnhart thanked Rupp Arena, Transylvania University, Georgetown College and Frederick Douglass High School for hosting home events during the renovation.

Director Barnhart stated that later in the meeting, the Committee and the Board of Trustees will be asked to approve some philanthropic gifts that he wants to recognize.

- A gift commitment of \$10 million from L.T. Gibson.
- A gift commitment of \$8 million from Joe and Kelly Craft.
- In addition, a highlight of the 1984 basketball reunion was the announcement of a \$1 million gift commitment from Jim Master, a player on the '84 team. The gift will be split evenly between Athletics and the Gatton College of Business and Economics.

“Since we last met in September, we need to acknowledge the passing of two long-time staff members – Chuck Stivers and Bettie Lou Evans. Chuck was a member of the grounds crew for 22 years before his retirement. He was beloved by our outdoor sports teams and his co-workers on the grounds crew for his sense of humor and for his dedication to doing whatever it took to get the job done.”

“Bettie Lou was our women's golf coach and director of golf operations for nearly 40 years. She played a tremendous role in the development of golf, not only at UK but throughout the state. Her care for her student-athletes was in great evidence when she was inducted into the UK Athletics Hall of Fame and so many of her former players came out to support and congratulate her.”

In closing, Director Barnhart reported that the Big Ten Conference and Southeastern Conference had announced the formation of a joint advisory group of university presidents, chancellors, and athletics directors to address the significant challenges facing college athletics and the opportunities for the betterment of the student-athlete experience. These challenges, including but not limited to recent court decisions, pending litigation, a patchwork of state laws, and complex governance proposals, compel the two conferences to take a leadership role in developing solutions for a sustainable future of college sports.

The advisory group will engage with other constituencies as necessary, including consultation with student-athletes and other key leadership groups from within both conferences. “As noted above, we are in the midst of numerous uncertainties in college athletics, but we will keep sight of our primary goals – education and competition, putting diplomas in hands and championship rings on fingers.”

Chair Melanson thanked Director Barnhart for his report and introduced Executive Associate Athletics Director Melissa Gleason for her report.

V. Business Items

NCAA Agreed Upon Procedures Report and Submission

Director Gleason described the process of gathering and comparing the data for the NCAA Agreed Upon Procedures Report and NCAA report submission. She explained the NCAA submission report is the final portion of the Fiscal Year reporting and is part of the FORVIS agreed-upon procedures process. Ms. Gleason reminded the Committee that both the NCAA Agreed-Upon Procedures report and the 2022 NCAA Report Submission are two separate items but part of the same process in the Athletics Department's end-of-year reporting.

Ms. Gleason discussed the challenge of the NCAA report submission and how it allows each institution to interpret the various line items, making it difficult to accurately compare the results among UK's peer institutions.

Chair Melanson thanked Director Gleason and asked for any questions. He reminded the Committee that a vote was not required and that the reports were informational only. He then introduced Director Barnhart to introduce the FCRs for the Committee's consideration.

VI. Other Business

FCR 1 Acceptance of Gift: Larry T. Gibson

Director Barnhart stated that FCR 1 is a request that the Committee recommend to the Finance Committee the acceptance of a \$10 million gift from Mr. L.T. Gibson for the benefit of the UK Athletics Department, reminding the Committee that Pursuant to Administrative Regulation 8:2, any capital project with an estimated cost of \$1 million dollars or more must be approved by the Board of Trustees prior to initiation. "Mr. Gibson is the chief executive officer of US LBM a leading distributor of specialty building materials and importantly, is a big Kentucky Wildcats fan. His generous gift will support the 600 UK student-athletes through capital improvements. Mr. Chairman, FCR 1."

Chair Melanson asked for a motion to approve FCR 1. Trustee Case moved approval, and Trustee Shoop seconded the motion. The motion carried without dissent.

FCR 6 Acceptance of Gift: Joseph W. and Ambassador Kelly Craft

Director Barnhart stated that FCR 6 is a request that the Committee recommend to the Finance Committee the acceptance of an \$8 million gift from Mr. Joseph W. Craft, III, and Ambassador Kelly Craft for the benefit of the UK Athletics Department. Mr. Craft and Ambassador Craft are long-time philanthropists and supporters of higher education. Ambassador Craft is a previous member of the UK Board of Trustees and currently serves

on the UK Investment Committee. “We are grateful for this gift that will be used to support the UK Athletics program and related capital projects. Mr. Chairman, FCR 6.”

Chair Melanson asked for a motion to approve FCR 6. Trustee Webb moved approval, and Trustee Shoop seconded the motion. The motion carried without dissent.

#### FCR 7 Acceptance of Gift Commitment: Jim and Sheila Master

Director Barnhart stated that FCR 7 is a request that the Committee recommend to the Finance Committee the acceptance of a \$1 million gift from Mr. and Mrs. Jim and Sheila Master, for the benefit of both the UK Athletics Department and the Gatton College of Business and Economics. The gift will support student success and capital projects. “Jim earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration while helping guide the Kentucky basketball team to the 1984 Final Four before being drafted by the National Basketball Association’s (NBA) Atlanta Hawks. Jim currently serves as Director and Financial Advisor for RW Baird and Company. Mr. Chairman, FCR 7.”

Chair Melanson asked for a motion to approve FCR 7. Trustee Webb moved approval, and Trustee Case seconded the motion. The motion carried without dissent.

#### FCR 22 Improve Kroger Field Stadium (Ribbon Board and Lighting)

Director Barnhart stated that FCR 22 is a capital project for ribbon board and lighting upgrades at Kroger Field.

This project will upgrade the ribbon boards surrounding the seating bowl’s interior which were installed in 2011 and have exceeded their useful life. Additionally, the lighting systems at Kroger Field also require upgrades to better align with the amenities experienced in modern football stadiums. The lighting and ribbon board upgrade project will improve the experience for student-athletes and the loyal fans who attend their games. The project is estimated to cost no more than \$7 million, was authorized by the 2022 Kentucky General Assembly, and is within the total legislative authority of \$15 million. Once approved, this project will be funded with private funds.

Chair Melanson asked for a motion to approve FCR 22. Trustee Shoop moved approval, and Trustee Berry seconded the motion. The motion carried without dissent.

#### FCR 23 Improve Athletics Facilities 4 (Track and Field Complex)

Director Barnhart stated that FCR 23 is a capital project to resurface the outdoor track surface.

The current surface, which was installed in 2012 is past its useful life and must be replaced. The UK Track and Field program has produced multiple household names in international track and field competitions including world record holders, Sydney McLaughlin, Keni Harrison, Jasmine Camacho-Quinn and Alexis Holmes. The project,

which is projected to cost less than \$2 million was authorized by the 2022 Kentucky General Assembly and is well within the total legislative authority of \$5 million. Once approved, the project will be funded with private funds. Mr. Chairman, FCR 23.

Chair Melanson asked for a motion to approve FCR 23. Trustee Berry moved approval, and Trustee Shoop seconded the motion. The motion carried without dissent.

Chair Melanson reminded the Committee that the full Athletics Report had been loaded to Directors Desk and urged the members to review all the accomplishments of the university's student-athletes.

VII. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Hardwick', written in a cursive style.

Katie Hardwick  
University Athletics Committee Secretary