Wildcats not ready; Hanson to UK?

Right between the ears.

That's where Bowling Green hit UK last Saturday.

Inexplicably, the Wildcats were not ready to play a football game on their first Saturday in September. The team was flat, the crowd of 67,000 was flat, everyone collectively waiting for something to happen.

And something did. Bowling Green's Heisman Trophy candidate Brian McClure marched his team to a winning touchdown against a UK pass defense that turned to putty in the final 2:41 of the game.

When Bowling Green's 30-26 victor was in the books, UK coach Jerry Claiborne sat perplexed, shocked, and rubbed the back of his neck. In nearly four decades of coaching the man has seen much, but this Saturday appeared to baffle even Claiborne.

"We never got cranked up with any emotion," he said softly. "Never got the adrenalin going. Our players on the field weren't excited, the (players on the) sidelines weren't excited. Nobody really got excited about the situation."

How could a college football team with hopes for another winning season, a third consecutive bowl bid, and playing its opener at home against a team with a Heisman Trophy candidate, not be excited?

Claiborne started red eyed.

"I just didn't have them ready to play," he said, characteristically shouldering the blame. "I did a poor job of preparing them for the game."

But it was more than that. UK's real problem was between its collective ears. The Wildcats were not excited about Bowling Green. Nor did they seem to be synchronized in rhythm.

Kentucky's defense was poor, its kick coverage awful, and the offense was spotty, not together.

Without naming him, Claiborne alluded at junior quarterback Bill Bandell.

"Offensively, I felt like there were times when we had some people open and didn't get the ball to them," he said. "Another time our quarterback took the snap and went this wrong way. We did things like that and it hurt us."

Banadell's numbers were impressive enough, 15 of 34 passing for 308 yards and a touchdown, but they were lost in the shuffle too.

There were other factors as well that turned UK's sunny Saturday into a melancholy sunset.

■ Bowling Green was no season opening patsy and never showed a sign of surrendering. It seemed to puzzle and frustrate Claiborne's team when the Falcons did not follow the script, particularly after falling behind 17-7 at halftime.

■ UK had no leadership. It was a team that sorely missed Paul Calhoun and Cam Jacobs on defense and George Adams on offense. And not just their all-star performance, but the emotion each pumped into the team with a cliche play here and there last season.

■ And, Bowling Green's offensive front had little trouble thwarting UK's pass rush. It was non-existent in the second half.

Overal, UK was listless, leaderless, out of rhythm.

"Nobody got excited," Claiborne said again. "Nobody except Bowling Green.

"We didn't play well in any phase of the game," he added. "Our running game, we never did get any consistency out of it and we never really blew anybody off the line of scrimmage. We just were never aggressive."

Banadell: "It just didn't seem like everybody was into the game. I don't think we took em for granted, anything like that. Afterall, they had a Heisman candidate on the team. I don't know what it was.

"We've got Tulane coming up here next week and this is going to give them a bowl, get them thinking they can beat us," Banadell added. "But there's no excuse. We're just going to have to re-evaluate ourselves."

Bright spot

Joe Worley's school record four field goals was one bright spot, but Worley on punter Jay Tesar from North Hardin High School in Radcliff jogged onto the field four times Saturday and punted 46, 47, 45 and 46 yards.

"On that first kick I didn't know what I'd be like, didn't know what I'd feel like," the kid said. "I wasn't nervous before the kick. I was nervous after the kick. I didn't expect that. But I felt confident after the first one."

Tesar earned himself a place on the squad. More than that he had earned respect and perhaps even an early chance to become 'one of the boys.' A good feeling.

"Yes, I feel good, really good," he said smiling.

Pressure? Tesar admitted he likes it, perhaps thrives on it.

"I prefer kicking in games because you get one shot," he said smiling.

So, does the kid get a scholarship? Claiborne, almost grinning: "Well, Tesar did an excellent job today all right. But this was just one game. We'll have to wait and see how things go."

Tidbits

This week Reggie Hanson, a 6-7 forward from Pulaski County High, will become the first basketball player to become coach Eddie Sutton's first recruit at Kentucky. Hanson, who was a member of the Kentucky junior team that toured Europe this summer, is among the top five high school prospects in the state.

According to one talent scout, Reggie's rate of improvement from the start of his junior year was probably second only to Rex Chapman. He has the tools to be a good one.

Comment: Good move, Sutton's first recruit being a Kentuckian.

Shawn Pennington a football/basketball standout at Clay County High School was a guest at the University of Kentucky for the Bowling Green game. Pennington, who led the basketball Tigers to the Sweet 16 last spring, was visiting UK as a football prospect. He is a quarterback.

Word is that the University of Louisville is interested in Pennington as a basketball prospect.

Readers write

About last week's column on the University of Kentucky or *Louisville* or *Lexington*? I received five telephone calls, one letter and a post card.

■ **Mrs. Geraldine Edwards of Elizabethtown writes:** "Needless to say this UK fan is upset with your choice of word describing WHAS' challenge you to explain exactly what you mean when you say arrogant image?' I would like to know why you choose to use that word arrogant in column after column when referring to the only University of Kentucky?"

Mrs. Edwards continues: "On the issue of WHAS Radio switching from UK to UL. Do you agree that UK had a choice of word with WHAS? Your column led the reader to believe that UK had no choice in the matter at all. I believe the UK fans may think WHAS could be the losers."

Comment: Presumably, like any business, WHAS Radio made a business decision based on profit potential. The message was clearly the Louisville station believes its (financial) future is with the University of Louisville and not UK. As to 'arrogance' at UK, the text of the column detailed how and why I believe the attitudes and complacency of *certain* (not all) officials at UK have cost the school both in profits and public relations. Clearly the beneficiary has been Uofl.

■ **A postcard from a lady in Shelbyville who asked that her name be withheld:** "How do you go about writing to the FCC? What is the adress? I want to write to have the clear channel removed from WHAS. PS — Please put the address in the paper, other people are interested."

Comment: The address for the Federal Communications Commission is 1919 M Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20554

Drugs in baseball

On baseball's drug gate: trial in Pittsburgh, this writer suggested recently that since Kansas City outfielder Lonnie Smith—testifying under immunity from prosecution—blew the whistle on several baseball players for using cocaine, he might be in trouble when he steps into a big league batter's box. Sometimes opposing players look upon fellows like Smith as a snitch and "deal" with them according to their own laws.

I received a letter last week taking issue with that position.

■ **Mrs. Gloria Whitford of Elizabethtown writes:** "You obviously equate a grown adult using cocaine with a young lad sneaking a smoke behind the barn. 'Boys will be boys' wink.

"You obviously don't like tattletales. I don't either."

Mrs. Whitford, who has children of her own, went on to point out three instances that "do not come under the heading of tattle-tales." 1. If persons are hurting themselves. 2. If persons are hurting someone else. 3. They were hurting someone else's property.

"I was to be told immediately," Mrs. Whitford said. "I believe those rules apply just as much to an adult child abuse, spouse abuse, drunk driving as a malicious destruction.

And, she concluded, "There is another phrase that is sometimes used — They are only hurting themselves. Nothing could be farther from the truth when using hard drugs."

Comment: Thank you Mrs. Whitford. Certainly your points are well taken and worthy of everyone's attention and consideration.

My point was speculative on what mind set Smith is liable to face on the baseball field. I do not equate or condone the use of any drug with smoking behind the barn. It is obviously far more serious than that. However, I do have trouble with the testimony offered by an admitted hard drugs' user who has been given immunity from going to jail.

Interest in football up

■ A response came last week on a view put forth (in this space) by Fort Knox High coach Joe Jaggers that "Kentucky is a football state.

"I'm inclined to agree with Joe," says Russell Reed, a native of Russellville. "I've been following football around here since 1976 and I think it's definitely gotten more popular."

A long time football fan, Reed says he became enamored with high school football during his tour of duty in the U.S. Air Force. He was stationed in Texas seven different times. And boy does the football *is the thing*.

Reed said he is a fan of Fort Knox High School.

"I pull for Knox because it's a small school. And yet they get good talent in from around the world and do well with what they have.

If you have an opinion, for or against the view that the popularity of football is on the rise in Kentucky, let me hear from you.

■ On another front, East Hardin High School director of athletics Ken Tabb said last week that his school enjoyed its biggest ticket sale in the history of the school Aug. 30 when it hosted Elizabethtown.

"Our gate was a little bit shy of $4,000, something like $3,800 plus."

Tabb said "I can remember when we didn't take in that much in a season. But we needed it because we have some outstanding bills we needed to pay. This was a real shot in the arm for us."

■ **From Augusta, Ky. Don Irvine, basketball coach at Augusta High School writes:** "I would like to inform you of a deserving young man who doesn't always receive the recognition he deserves because he participates at a very small school (100 students in grades 9-12). Bob Ral is a 17-year-old, 6-7, 230 pounds and a senior at Augusta High.

"Because of the lack of past success of the basketball program he has been overlooked by most (football recruiting services) publications although he started for three years. Last year he was named the the 10th Region all star team.

Ral averaged 19.4 points, 13.5 rebounds and more than four blocked shots a game, Irvine reports.

Because of Bob we are anticipating a strong season in 1985-86," the coach added. "This young man would like to play small college or junior college basketball and I would like to see him get some much deserved publicity when hoop season rolls around."

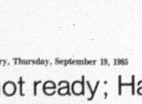
Comment: I spoke with Kentucky Wesleyan coach Wayne Chapman and Bellarmine coach Joe Reibel about Ral, as well as other players who perhaps get lost in the media shuffle under the likes of Felton Spencer, Rex Chapman, Scott Draud, et al.

"I'll be getting this information on Ral to my assistant coach right away," Wayne Chapman said. "But actually these days, very few players who can really play go undrafted. Somebody finds out about 'em and then word gets out."

Reibel: "We'll find the good players. I don't care who they are or where they are, they get found these days."

And so it goes.

Invite your questions and points of view. Write to Bob Watkins *Sports In Kentucky*, Route 1, Glendale, Ky 42740.■



Bob Watkins

Sports In Kentucky

A laugh among grads

Basketball has to be a fun game, 'cause these Nicholas County Alumni were getting a great kick out of the re-telling of some memorable ploys. They were present at the homecoming reception held Friday night prior to the game with Fairview. From left, Leo Lynam '59, Eddie Day '65, Donnie Hillock '57, and Terry Trussell '69. — Mercury photo

Truck, tractor pull here Saturday night

A truck and tractor pull sponsored by the Carlisle-Nicholas County Chamber of Commerce will be held Saturday, Sept. 21 at the Reno Runck farm on the Old Paris Road.

The pull begins at 7 p.m., with weigh-ins starting at 5 p.m.

Six classes will be featured. They include:

Class 1, 5800-lb. two-wheel drive modified truck, with prize money of $200 for first, $100 for second, $50 for third and $25 for fourth.

Class 2, 8000-lb. pro-stock tractor, prize money of $200, $100, $50 and $25.

Class 3, 5800-lb. 4 x 4 modified truck, 150 percent payback.

Class 4, 6000-lb. two wheel drive open truck, $300, $150, $75, $25.

Class 5, 9500-lb. pro-stock tractor, $200, $100, $50 and $25.

Class 6, Wildcard, 7000-lb. and under, 100 percent payback.

Entry fees are $20 per driver, with a $10 reentry fee.

Admission is $2.50 for students and adults, with children under 12 admitted free.

Food and soft drinks will be sold on the grounds.

For more information call 289-5992, 289-5726 or 289-2228.

Proceeds help sponsor numerous Chamber-sponsored events, including the annual Christmas Parade in December.

Former UK band members sought for Homecoming

The University of Kentucky Wildcat Marching Band is looking for a few hundred former band members to glitter in for the Homecoming football game band performance Sept. 28. Rehearsal is at 8:30 a.m.

Band alumni also are invited to a picnic before the game to be held in the field beside Commonwealth Stadium behind the Kentucky Educational Television station.

Members will perform one song on their own — My Old Kentucky Home — and a few songs in concert with the current band.

Former band members should pre-register by calling the UK Band office, 1-257-3224, for details on game tickets and the picnic lunch.

Fairview 24, Nicholas 0

The Nicholas County Bluejackets were defeated in their first home game by the Fairview Eagles, 24-0.

Neither team scored in the first quarter. During the second quarter Fairview scored a touchdown and a two-point conversion.

In the third and fourth quarters the Eagles also scored a touchdown and a two-point conversion for a total of 24 points, while holding the Bluejackets scoreless.

This Friday, Nicholas County will host another tough opponent, Beechwood. Game time is 8 p.m.

Men's softball tournament

A men's softball tournament will be held Sept. 27-29 at the East End Park. A drawing of teams is scheduled Sept. 26 at 7 p.m. at the park.

Entry fee is $75 per team. Teams will hit their own blue dot balls. For information call 289-5568, or call Bill McNabb at Blue Grass Knitting.

LL cheerleaders, girls' basketball tryouts Sunday

Nicholas County Little League cheerleaders and girls' basketball tryouts will be held Sunday, Sept. 22, 2 p.m. at Nicholas County Elementary gymnasium.

To be eligible cheerleaders must be in the third through sixth grades, ballplayers in second through sixth grades.

Each child must be accompanied by an adult.

This will be the only tryout for those wishing to participate in the Little League program.

For more information call 289-7539 or 289-5919.

EKU to host high school seniors on October 5

Hundreds of prospective students are expected to visit the Eastern Kentucky University campus Saturday, Oct. 5 for the annual "EKU Spotlight" day in Richmond.

"Choosing a college or university is serious business for students," said Les Grigsby, EKU's director of admissions.

"We've found over the years that a few hours on EKU's campus is more valuable in helping the student understand Eastern than any number of letters or catalogs," he said.

Activities will include tours of the EKU campus, displays from EKU's nine colleges and more than 150 degree programs in the Keen Johnson Building's ballroom, lunch specials at the Powell Building cafeteria and open house at the University's 17 residence halls.

For more information contact the EKU Division of Admissions, 203 Jones Building, EKU, Richmond, Ky. 40475-0931, or call 1-622-2106.

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