Bob Watkins

Sports In Kentucky

King football?

A letter came from one of Kentucky's more ardent sports fan last week and brought football back to center stage.

Edward Aaron of Science Hill, Ky. writes rather persuasively that "the press in Kentucky calls basketball *king*. Unfortunately, the game at the prep level cannot accommodate all those would-be princes. In fact, about twice as many prepsters end up playing varsity football in this state as opposed to the number of those playing varsity hoops.

"It's simply the nature of the games. Football squads can be larger and the game tends to accommodate a wider variety of players' shapes, sizes and athletic skills.

"So what' you say? Well, aside from lynch mobs, I thought sheer numbers had legitimate clout. So, why doesn't football and its players get a fair amount of press? Dawn-playing the sport will not make it go away nor will the fair publicizing of it diminish the popularity of basketball. I've been to several high school football games and basketball games throughout the state this past year. Ironically, the largest crowds I saw were at the football games. The *king* may rule at certain places and on certain occasions, but I think the foot soldiers (pardon the pun) are getting at least 'knighted'.

"I suspect fans and athletes may gain a step on the press in terms of growing football interest in Kentucky. I also think that the press (especially columnists) has a responsibility to cover both sports throughout the year. Afterall, football has to share the spotlight with basketball even during the height of its season. There are many of us who want to see high school and college football on its rightful plane in this state. Personally, I am not flattered when we are called a "basketball state." It infers a narrowness of perspective. The Commonwealth is capable of more.

Basketball is a grand game and I am one of its more ardent supporters, but its press coverage is often trivial at the expense of football stories that have some real substance. For example: While a total of three basketball players were "X-rayed" more than adequately after they had signed with UK and Uoff., three players from one small 12th region school were awarded college football scholarships, one to the University of Mississippi. Bet you never even heard. And while Rex Chapman got press release on press release, an equally talented and sought after pregster, Al Baker, Trigg County football phenom, went largely ignored. I think Kentuckians have the capacity for being proud of more than accomplishment in basketball. Look at the basketball rosters of UK and U of L. How many Kentuckians do you find? Look at the football rosters of same. No contest. At the pro level check the accomplishments of native Kentuckians in the NFL and AFL over the past 200 years. Then check the same for the NBA. Again no contest. Perhaps the bread is buttered on the underside.

Some football experts predict there will be 25-30 legitimate major college football prospects in Kentucky next year. I daresay that's a number greater than will be signed to play major college basketball. I would like to read about those football players. I'm sure their communities, schools and families would like to do that too. If the press gets behind the sport and its players the game will improve. Nothing works like publicity. I would hope that you and the other noteworthy columnists in this state pick up the banner. Heaven knows, the KHSAA will never do it.

Response

Mr. Aaron makes a good argument and there are numbers to support his position. Example: UK's athletic budget announced last week indicates Wildcat football will put $1+ million into the athletic coffers (7 home dates this autumn) while the basketball team (the schedule has 16 home dates next season) is projected to earn $2.3 million.

However, there are factors not taken into account that fans have a right to know about.

✔ With few exceptions — Newport Central Catholic's Bob Schneider comes to mind — high school football coaches in Kentucky are notoriously bad about working closely with the media at showcasing their sport and those who play it. Example: Following one season recently little more than 60 percent of the all-state ballots sent to football coaches were filled out and returned.

Perhaps they are not organized enough, but by and large prep football coaches in Kentucky simply do not do enough public relations work for their programs, athletes.

On the flip side there are (precious few) coaches like Schneider who take time and effort to mail flyers with photos and statistics and comments about his team's all-State candidates to members of the media. It makes a difference.

✔ Unlike prep basketball, high school football has no ballyhooed summer camps in Kentucky. And there is no formal talent rating service like those in Alabama, Louisiana and Florida. Talent rating systems not only help coaches evaulate, but give fans something to analyze, discuss, stay interested in year round.

✔ Radio call-in shows. Only last week Jack Sutherland was on WHAS-Radio talking about college basketball nearly two months since the end of the season. How many such radio programs are devoted to football? We know the answer.

✔ The KHSAA does nothing in the way of dispatching information or promotional material about prep football to media in Kentucky.

✔ The two year old Kentucky-Tennessee prep football all-star series (July 19 at Commonwealth Stadium) has not drawn well or gotten much attention because its promoters have not made a sustained effort to showcase the game, its participants to more members of the media.

Final comment: If title state of Kentucky really has "25 to 30 legitimate college prospects for next season I would like to hear from some coaches.

UK basketball news

■ Coach Eddie Sutton's team leaves June 18 for a two-week tour of Japan. The Wildcats will play in the Kirin world Basketball Tournament June 21-22 along with national teams from Czechoslovakia, Finland and Japan.

All things considered the trip gives UK quite a jump on the 1986-87 season. First, the NCAA authorizes Sutton a team 10 practice days (June 8-17); the players will live together from June 18 till July 4; and they will get an education viewing another country and its people.

"Our players will have a chance to get a good look at a different culture and a different way of life," Sutton explained. "It's a great learning experience."

■ While incoming freshmen Rex Chapman, Reggie Hanson and Derrick Miller will not make the trip, Roger Harden, Leroy Byrd and Kenny Walker will.

■ Walker has accepted an invitation from the National Basketball Association to attend its college draft fete June 17 in New York City. He will fly to Chicago that evening and join the UK party before its departure for Japan.

Incidentally, UK's poster of Kenny 'Sky' Walker that sold like hot cakes around the Commonwealth took second place in a national poster contest. First place went to Duke's starting five who were photographed in their warm-up suits in a chemistry lab. Third place went to Georgia Tech.

■ UK's basketball schedule was released for last week and there are some new names on it — Austin Peay (coached by ex-UK assistant Lake Kelly) Nov. 29, Texas Tech on Dec. 2, Lamar on Dec. 13, Iona in UKIT on Dec. 18 and Navy Jan. 25.

Navy, featuring All-American David Robinson, will play UK at Rupp Arena on Super Bowl Sunday, Jan. 25, 1987. The game will be aired by ABC-Television.

Recruiting news

It's early of course, but two names have surfaced in connection with recruiting efforts at the University of Louisville and Kentucky.

Jay Edwards, a 6-4 guard/forward who averaged 24 points for state champion Marion, Ind. last winter, is said to be headed to Uoff.

Lyndon Jones, a 6-2 guard and teammate to Edwards who averaged 19 points, is at or near the top of Kentucky's shopping list.

Top '2 Dozen' prospects

Who will be the top high school basketballers in Kentucky next winter? Veteran talent scout Rick Bolus has put his list together.

See Top Two Dozen list.

Parting shot

Remember the news item a few weeks ago about LSU Coach Dale Brown's intention to travel this summer to Mt. Ararat in Turkey to search for Noah's Ark?

The trip was cancelled because of terrorism in the Middle East. Brown said he was not that concerned about himself, but rather, if a terrorist pulled a grenade on an airplane, for example, he would be obliged to throw an it, smother the explosives, and save the plane and its passengers.

And so it goes.

If you have a point of view you would like to share, I would like to hear from you. Write to Bob Watkins *Sports In Kentucky* Rt. 1, Glendale, Ky. 42740 ■

TOP TWO DOZEN

Player	Ht.	Pos.	School	Second Dozen		
John Pelphrey	6-7	F	Prestonsburg	Matt Elkins	6-7	C
Sean Sutton	6-1	PG	Henry Clay	Jeff Goodman	6-3	F
Devon Fleshman	6-6	F	Mason Co.	Richie Farmer	6-0	G
Junior Groves	6-4	GF	Lou. Seneca	Kevin Ellery	6-4	F
Doyed Higgs	6-3	G	Owensboro	Mike Gray	6-4	F
Stan Shadoy	6-3	G	North Hardin	Jerome Coles	6-4	FC
Mike Holt	6-3	G	Jefferson Town	Scott Bailey	6-3	G
Prince Stewart	5-11	G	Lex. Lafayette	Don Chesnut	6-2	GF
Donald Tyra	5-10	PG	Fort Thomas	Don Chesnut	6-4	F
Shannon Insley	6-0	PG	Russellville	Dave Schuerman	6-2	G
Lamonte Wade	6-2	F	Hopkinsville	Richmond Wilson	6-3	G
Desmond Porter	6-2	F	Lou. PEP	Mike Peachers	6-3	F

Junior to-be

Bluejackets enter summer cage league

Nicholas County is one of 46 schools which has a varsity team entered in the 1986 Sports World/Adidas High School Summer Basketball League in Lexington.

Play got underway this week with Nicholas County players facing a pair of games on Thursday night. In the 5:30 p.m. opener, NCHS will take on Lexington Catholic, followed by an 8 p.m. date with Mullins.

Each team plays a round robin schedule within the league. Future Thursday opponents are Danville, Jessamine County, Covington Catholic, Mercer County, Mayesville, Monticello and Woodford County.

At the conclusion of the regular season, all 46 teams will compete in a single elimination tournament to select a Sports World Sweet 16. Play is set for July 14-19.

No games are scheduled June 30-July 4.

Thirteen players have attended practice here and have indicated to coach Lee Cruse that they will participate in the summer league.

They are: Kelly Brookshire, Gannon Bryant, Todd Day, Lee Cruse III, Danny Wells, Ray Phillips, Tip Fryman, Kevin Hughes, Glenn Stone, Wendell McNabb, Chris Anderson, Scott Allison and David Sparks.

Coach Cruse said that game experience, not necessarily winning, is a top priority in joining the league for the first time.

Corrections

A story in last week's Mercury stated that NCHS band director Danny Baker had resigned. Baker's contract was not renewed.

Derek Zachary, not Phillip Coldiron, finished fifth in the 300 low hurdles at the state track meet in Lexington. The two were in lanes next to each other and were incorrectly identified by the event scorer.

The Mercury regrets the errors and is happy to set the record straight.

FCA and overall winner

David Sparks, shown with coach Robbie Barr, was named Fellowship of Christian Athletes junior high student of the year at closing day ceremonies. Sparks was also winner of the award for highest overall average for a boy. — Guthrie photo

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FCA cookout

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes of Nicholas County High School enjoyed a cookout at the home of Scott Ramey in Sharpsburg the week before school was out. Those attending were, first row, Rachel B. (dog). Coach Robert Barr, Mrs. Phyllis Ramey, Kelly Howard (seated); Scott Ramey (seated) Roxanne Reed, Johnny Sibert, Sheila Livingood, Nikki Earlywine, Kevin Anderson (seated). Wendall McNabb, Les Hardin, Alison Knapke, Phillip Coldiron, David Sparks, Shelly Hamilton. Second row, Ryn Allison, Tracy Hollar, Leslie Duncan, Anesya Hunt, Melissa Ritchie, Rusanna Arnold, Jill Irvin, Deanna Fryman, Cami Clark, Karri Beth Buckles, Todd Day, James Hill, Ray Phillips, Derek Zachary. Third row, Dwaine Curran, Coach Greg Letcher, Tip Fryman, William Workman, Keith Howard, Neal Metcalfe, Robert McGuffey. Fourth row, Brian Brierly, Rusty Scott, Jody Duncan, Robyn Brookshire, Terry Hill, Alan Hardin. — Photo submitted

Rameys host FCA outing

Scott Ramey and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ollie C. Ramey, entertained the Nicholas County Huddle of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at their home on the Upper Sharpsburg Road with a cookout. This was the last regular meeting of the school year. Forty-two members attended.

Officers for the new year were elected. Dwaine Curran was elected president, David Sparks, vice-president, Tracy Hollar, secretary and Allen Hardin, treasurer.

Robert McGuffey, Melissa Ritchie, Terry Hill, Anessia Hunt, Ron Allison and Kelly Howard were named as membership chairmen.

The FCA is an organization made up of athletes and coaches and all whom they influence. Theme for 1986 is "Run to Finish. It's God's job to set the course, it's our job to run it."

The Nicholas County Huddle is one of the largest in the state. They meet once a month during the school year for devotion and fellowship. Coach Robert Barr, sponsor of the group, hopes the Huddle will continue to grow and become stronger in the years to come.

Barr said, "We are losing an excellent president, Scott Ramey, and other senior officers. They have done an outstanding job for us throughout the year and have really helped the Huddle grow. They are a fine group of Christian athletes."

To Nicholas County

My family and I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the wonderful people of Nicholas County who worked and supported us in the State Representative election on May 27.

It is difficult to put into words our deep appreciation of your kindness and hospitality. We realize many of you made a special effort to go vote. Also many of you worked long hours in our behalf with no thought of personal gain. For these reasons we feel this has been a very positive experience.

To the other two candidates and their families we send our best wishes. Our congratulations to Mr. Arnold.

We are looking forward to a future of friendship with all of you.

Thank you again,

Tom Hogge

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Classified personnel pay raised

Classified personnel serving Nicholas County Schools will receive a pay hike. At the June 9 meeting of the board of education, an across the board raise of five percent was approved, Supt. Donald G. Elder announced.

In other business, the board voted:

* To employ Shawn Parrish as band director and music teacher for 1986-87 school year.
* Paying of salaries and bills approved to close out 1985-86 school year.
* To join Limestone Academic League at a cost of $1,000.
* To grant Kathy Caswell a sick and/or maternity leave beginning August 25, 1986 and ending six weeks later.
* To allow Voltex Company to sell school jackets as a project with PTA.
* To have Mrs. Viola Cleaver assist Coach Barbara Kenney at basketball camp in August.
* To advertise for bids to be opened at July 14, 1986 board meeting, the following: lubricants, antifreeze, tires and tubes, bakery products, gasoline and dairy products.
* To advertise for bids on acoustical ceiling and six inches of insulation in high school gymnasium.
* To hold a called board meeting on June 23, 1986 to discuss any and all business.
* To provide Errors & Omissions insurance for all employees at cost of $1,075.
* To table depository bids of Deposit Bank and First National Bank until called board meeting.

Highest overall average

Heather Hall compiled the highest overall average for a girl, including highest in science, civics and health. She is congratulated by Principal Gerald Hammons at NCES eighth grade awards program June 2. — Guthrie photo

Prominent press figures profiled on 'Newsleaders'

Prominent news editors and publishers will be the focus when the series, "Newsleaders," hosted by NBC journalist John Chancellor, premieres Thursday, June 19, at 7:30 p.m. on KET.

In the premiere episode, Chancellor talks frankly with Katherine Graham, the courageous and determined woman behind The Washington Post. In her first in-depth television interview, Graham discusses her insider's view of Watergate; why The Post kept the story alive for months, and today, why she respects Richard Nixon as a commentator on world affairs.

On June 26 "Newsleaders" visits Otis Chandler, the man behind the remarkable transformation of The Los Angeles Times, the nation's fourth largest newspaper. In the 1960's, Time magazine named the L.A. Times one of the nation's ten worst newspapers.

"Newsleaders" will interview former Wall Street Journal Editor Vermont Royster on July 3 and former Courier-Journal and Louisville Times publisher Barry Bingham, Sr., on July 17. Royster spent more than 50 years with the Journal, during which time he interviewed every president from Roosevelt to Reagan. The Bingham family built a media fortune on personal responsibility. Bingham says he believes a good newspaper must never lose touch with its readers.

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