Voted Kentucky's best weekly Sports Column KENTUCKY No. 18



"Big Red Bird Flies toward Eastern Kentucky"

By Derek Fugate
<u>Times-Voice</u> Sports
Photos: Derek Fugate



It's time this week for the annual SEC/ACC Basketball Challenge! This will be a trend-setter for each conference moving forward into December. Last year it wasn't even close, with the SEC winning 14 of the 16 match-ups, and 11 of those victories by double digits.

The SEC is currently considered one of the top two basketball conferences, while the ACC has really dropped from years past. There are only two ranked ACC teams in the AP-Top 25 this week. I'm sure the ACC will look to make a statement, but that's easier said than done.

This SEC/ACC Challenge takes place Tuesday and Wednesday, so by the time you may be reading this, the final games will be being played. The anchor games are Florida at Duke, UNC at Kentucky, Louisville at Arkansas and NC State at Auburn.

Florida lost its last game to non-ranked TCU over the holiday weekend. The Tar Heels are also coming

off a loss to Michigan State and the Razorbacks are in the same boat Razorbacks while just losing to Duke. The Wolfpack the most had disappointing end losing two games Invita-Maui tional. Those could all be



Khani Rooths goes up for the layup

factors in these upcoming match-ups for teams looking to bounce back.

Louisville will have a very intriguing month of December, despite how well the Cardinals have been playing and still remaining undefeated. The main reasons I look for Louisville to face adversity is the timing and locations of the games scheduled.

Card Nation is excited about facing Arkansas, as the former Louisville coach Kenny Payne is now the assistant coach to John Calipari. Also, one of Arkansas's star players; DJ Wagner, was once highly considering playing at Louisville just as his grandfather Milt Wagner did. This all sounds good, but you have to consider this is being played in Fayetteville, and the Razorbacks are coming off a loss to Duke,

a game they could've won.
Then the Cardinals travel

to Indianapolis to face Indiana, (the same team they embarrassed last year with a final score of 89-61, which was actually a closer score than the game really was.) This will definately be a game the Hoosiers and the fans have circled on their calendar but the Cardinals aren't thinking as much of.

After these two quad-1 road match-ups, the Cardinals return home to face a hungry Memphis squad followed be yet another road test, this time at Tennessee on its home floor. One more home game awaits with Montana, before going on the road yet again to open conference play at California and then at Stanford

I'm anxious to see how the Cardinals bear this long tough December schedule, as there will not be many opportunities for quality wins in the ACC. Only time will tell, Go Cards!

Time will tell

By James David Fugate Times-Voice Sports Photos: Donna Gray



While our "House Divided" side-by-side columns primarily regard Kentucky's and Louisville's championship basketball programs, occasions arise that demand our attention such as the recent firing of Mark Stoops, along with which candidates may surface to replace Kentucky football's departing winningest coach. Furthermore, the current acrid atmosphere rising above Kroger Field appears to be wafting down Nicholasville Road toward Rupp Arena, the result of hardwood and gridiron losses to Louisville being the strongest catalyst.

Is there a proven football coach out there somewhere with an ego big enough and a successful resume to match, who thinks, "I can make Kentucky football make Kentucky a contender in the SEC, if given enough time and NIL money?" That's one type of coach Kentucky's looking for; the other quite the opposite. The other being a young upstart in the likes of a Jon Sumrall, who parlayed a successful run at Troy into a job at Tulane, and most recently climbing the totem pole still higher, landing the head coaching position at Florida.

The older, proven coach risks having his stellar resume tarnished if he fails to elevate Kentucky's football program to the level of the SEC elites. It would in all probability be his last embarrassing stop, while the younger upstart really has nothing to lose. If he fails, he has nonetheless added "SEC Head Coach" to his resume, which will further



Kentucky's mascot "Scratch" pumps up the crowd

open doors that would've otherwise remained shut.

When it comes to Kentucky football, Big Blue Nation (BBN) has shown ample patience in regards to giving its head coach time to put all the pieces of the puzzle together. In the long run, spanning 13 seasons, Stoops' 82-80 record (best ever at UK), eight bowl appearances (4-4) and 2018 SEC Coach of the Year honor, were not good enough.

The same patience awarded to BBN's football coach; however, is not reserved for its basketball coach. With early season losses already suffered to Louisville and Michigan State, the 9:30 Tuesday matchup with fellow blue-blood North Carolina looms large on the horizon as I write this. Reading this, you know how that one turned out. The betting line had Coach Pope's Wildcats an 8.5 point favorite, but I'm not so sure that'll be the case

One has to wonder what the BBN mood would be should the Cats have fallen to the Tar Heels, and if they should lose again to Gonzaga Friday night at Bridgestone Arena in Nashville. Furthermore, what would happen if Kentucky were to Pitino's St. John's team at State Farm Arena the Saturday before Christmas? How many of these games would BBN be willing to forgive in loss?

The Wildcats may have

passed the eye test, but don't seem to be fully passing the "aye" test, with a few naysayers expressing their sentiments as seeing the glass as half empty, despite BBN having received what it'd asked for in the departure of Calipari. Gone are the one-and-dones, those future NBA greats who only chose UK as a quick gateway to the pros. Kentucky finally has players, particularly those which are homegrown, which will stay the course and play for the name on the front of the jersey and not the back, unless more NIL money or the prospects of more playing time lures them away. However, I'm not sold on it being a winning formula.

On the other hand, I'm not sure which formula will prove to be a winning one, considering college basketball to have morphed into the strangest of animals. With international players having professional experience and those coming from the G League enrolling in college, all a result of the NCAA having adjusted its position on professional experience, NIL has made college basketball more about the money than wins and losses for young athletes whose ages range from 18

Time will tell in both cases for Kentucky football and basketball... with the patience of BBN and the deep-pocketed NIL boosters being tested.

LEGALS

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Sealed Bids for the construction of the Prison Pump Station Screen Project will be received, by the City of Beattyville, at City Hall, 28 Railroad Street, Suite A, Beattyville, KY 41311, until 1:30 PM local time on December 16, 2025 at which time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Work for this Contract shall include Provide and install screen at the Prison Pump Station facility.

Bids will be received for a single prime Contract for each contract. Bids shall be on a lump sum price basis.

. This contract is not subject to wage rates. $\,$

The owner reserves the right to waive any informality or to reject any or all bids. No bidder may withdraw his bid within 90 days after the actual date of the opening thereof. Bid award will be made to the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder.

Edward Scott Jackson Mayor, City of Beattyville

Lee County District Court Case# 25-P-0068

LEGAL NOTICE

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF: Linda Carroll Land

Please take notice that Vicky Taylor, was on the 7th day of October, 2025 appointed and qualified as the Executor or Executrix/Administrator of the estate of Linda Carroll Land decreased, of Beattyville, Kentucky, and any all persons having claims against said Estate are hereby notified to present same, verified according to law, to said Thomas P. Jones, Attorney for the Estate or Vicky Taylor the Executor or Executrix/Administrator, within six (6) months from the above date and all persons indebted to said Estate are hereby requested to make payment to either the reverence person(s) within six (6) from the above date.

Thomas K Hollow PO Drawer 116 BEATTYVILLE, KY 41311 OR Vicky Taylor 4709 Waterside Court Lexington, KY 40513

Lee County District Court Case# 25-P-0063

LEGAL NOTICE

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF: Garland Joe Bowman

Please take notice that Patricia Cox, was on the 24th day of November, 2025 appointed and qualified as the Executor or Executrix/Administrator of the estate of Garland Joe Bowman decreased, of Beattyville, Kentucky, and any all persons having claims against said Estate are hereby notified to present same, verified according to law, to said Thomas P. Jones, Attorney for the Estate or Patricia Cox the Executor or Executrix/Administrator, within six (6) months from the above date and all persons indebted to said Estate are hereby requested to make payment to either the reverence person(s) within six (6) from the above date.

Thomas K Hollow PO Drawer 116 BEATTYVILLE, KY 41311 OR Patricia Cox 544 Old Hopewell Road Beattyville, KY 41311 Lee County District Court Case# 25-P-0064

LEGAL NOTICE

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF: Stephen A. Todd

Please take notice that Pamela Todd was on the 2nd day of September 2025 appointed and qualified as the Executor or Executrix/Administrator of the estate of Stephen A. Todd decreased, of Beattyville, Kentucky, and any all persons having claims against said Estate are hereby notified to present same, verified according to law, to said Thomas P. Jones, Attorney for the Estate or Pamela Todd the Executor or Executrix/Administrator, within six (6) months from the above date and all persons indebted to said Estate are hereby requested to make payment to either the reverence person(s) within six (6) from the above date.

Thomas K Hollow PO Drawer 116 BEATTYVILLE, KY 41311 OR Pamela Todd 121 Shaddy Lane Beattyville, KY 41311

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The Public Service Commission of Kentucky issued an order in Case No. 2025-00257 scheduling a public comment meeting to be held on December 18, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, at the Perry County Courthouse, 481 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Hazard, Kentucky 41701, for the purpose of hearing public comments on Kentucky Power Company's application for adjustment of its electric rates and approval of certain regulatory and accounting treatments in Case No. 2025-00257. An additional public meeting in Ashland will be held in January 2026, and will be noticed separately in advance of that meeting.

