

Kentucky lands top transfer Milan Momcilovic

By Keith Taylor
Kentucky Today

LEXINGTON — Kentucky got its man, finally.

Milan Momcilovic, the top available player remaining in the portal, chose UK over Louisville and Arizona on Monday night, according to multiple sources.

The 6-foot-8 Momcilovic played for Iowa State last season where he led college basketball in three-point shooting with a 48.7 percentage on 7.5 attempts per game.

His coming vaults UK back into the position of national contender under Mark Pope, who enters season three as the head coach.

Momcilovic told the Lexington Herald-Leader last month that Kentucky would be in the mix for his talents.

“I think Kentucky would be a good fit,” Momcilovic told the newspaper.

“I obviously went against Pope at BYU his first year (in the Big 12), and I loved how his team played. I think we went 1-1 against them, but they killed us at their place, because they fly the ball up the court and shoot 3s. I really like the way they play.”

Momcilovic’s style fits Kentucky perfectly with his ability to shoot from beyond the perimeter.

“Kentucky last year, he didn’t have enough shooters around him to really coach, I feel like, the way he wanted,” he said at the time.

“But I think — if I were to choose Kentucky — that would be a good fit for me. I feel like I’d be a great player for him, and he’d be a good coach for me.”

He went through the NBA Combine but eventually pulled out of the NBA Draft late last Wednesday. Since then UK fans — and others — have been



JEFF HANISCH PHOTO

Milan Momcilovic, who led college basketball in 3-point shooting last season at Iowa State, has chosen Kentucky over Louisville and Arizona.

on edge about when he was going to make his college choice.

It finally came Monday night and Big Blue Nation could finally exhale.

Momcilovic, who is from Pewaukee, Wisconsin, scored 1,349 points over his three years at Iowa State. He averaged 16.9 points per game last season.

Kentucky’s season ended with a loss to Momcilovic’s Iowa State team in the second round of the

NCAA tournament. The Wildcats were 22-14 after starting the season ranked ninth in the AP Top 25.

Iowa State coach T.J. Otzelberger said he had no hard feelings regarding Momcilovic’s future choices last month.

“I love Milan. Like, he’s my guy,” he said. “Obviously, we had a couple of years’ relationship prior to him even coming to Iowa State, and I think

what you want for everybody in your program is for their dreams to become a reality. And, obviously, with the season he had and how he’s continued to develop, he put himself in a great position for the draft.

“And yet, at the same time, in the climate and the landscape of college athletics, it’s important to keep your options open and leave that available at the end if it isn’t to go your way. So,

everything, all the conversations were great. I really respect how he went through and made his decisions, and I don’t think there’s anybody who’s a loser in this situation, right? We had a great experience with him for three seasons ... it’s important that he’s able to find a landing spot at a college that fits what he’s looking for.”

Who is Ousmane N'Diaye and just how good is he?

By Larry Vaught
Contributing Writer

Scout says N’Diaye could provide Kentucky with shooting, defensive versatility

Ousmane N’Diaye is a 6-foot-11, 210-pound forward from Senegal who has played in professional leagues in Germany, Italy and Spain.

He spent his most recent season at Vanoli Cremona, which competes in Italy’s top division — the same league where former Kentucky players Kyle Wiltjer and Nate Sestina play.

Ersin Demir is an international basketball scout who has compiled more than 350 in-depth scouting reports on international players, including one on N’Diaye in 2025. N’Diaye has also played for the Senegalese national team from 2023-26.

Demir calls N’Diaye a “tantalizing athlete with tremendous speed and quickness” who uses his fluid hips and mobility to create advantages on the perimeter.

“The lack of field goal attempts at the rim was surprising. However, after I wrote my in-depth piece on him, I understood much better that his game is built on creating angles in closeouts whereas his movement away from the ball mostly has him play as a shooter,” Demir said. “He’s not tough or physical, but shows



FIBA PHOTO

Ousmane N’Diaye brings international experience, perimeter shooting and defensive versatility to Kentucky after playing professionally in Germany, Italy and Spain.

good feel for positioning as a rebounder, giving him value on the defensive end alongside playing as a help-side shot-blocker.

“Due to the non-existing defensive three-second rule in the FIBA rulebook, primary fives are paint presences, which naturally left N’Diaye being relieved on those duties. But he’ll very much be in the paint for Kentucky to be a second rim protector alongside Malachi Moreno.”

N’Diaye has “NBA range” with his shot, and 135 of his 245 field goal attempts last season were

3-pointers. Despite being 6-foot-11, he had only 29 free throw attempts.

“His game is built on shooting, and that’s where I don’t see him taking a leap to be a star in college. I’ve been talking to a couple of Kentucky people, and warned them to not overrate him or expect too much,” Demir said. “He’s a primary floor-spacer who’ll benefit from the gravity of shooters around him.

“It’s not a bad thing by any means, as (Mark) Pope tries to play a game where he’s maximizing his number of 3s — at least he should with Moreno as

his primary paint presence — while focusing on playing four out as much as possible.”

Demir said N’Diaye, 22, will need time to adjust to rougher, more physical play, especially against Southeastern Conference teams.

“The European game is built on fundamentals rather than relying on athleticism or physicality. That’s been the negative in his profile in terms of his NBA future. It’s been a few years, and at Baskonia in Spain he didn’t play much,” Demir said. “When transferring to Cremona in Italy this last

summer, he has gotten quality minutes, rewarding his efforts with a 9.6 points and 6.9 rebounds per game season.

“Considering most games in Europe finish around 75 points per game, that’s a decent chunk of the production he took on himself as a shooting-heavy skill player.”

Even with the return of Moreno, Kentucky still needs a “star” presence on its 2026 roster. Could N’Diaye be that player?

“That’s unfair. He’s a good starter if he adjusts to life in Lexington and the SEC’s physicality,” Demir said.

His strength for Kentucky could be on defense.

“He’s a switchable quick defender. Good hands. At a steal and 0.6 blocks per game (last season), he’s getting his fair share of stocks while he’s proven to be a good team defender with consistent rotations, managing to keep quicker and smaller scorers in front of him,” Demir said. “I expect him to flourish against motion offenses or when teams try to switch against him and pressure the paint.”

However, Demir does not project N’Diaye as a star player or an NBA first-round draft pick.

Readers can subscribe to Demir’s newsletter, which covers the NBA Draft and Division I college basketball recruitment, at edemir@theinteriorjournal.com or nba.substack.com/subscribe