

Seahawks' Kupp on Rams split: 'Sometimes good things die'

BY DEREK HARPER
Field Level Media

SAN JOSE, CALIF.

Cooper Kupp quickly rattled off Robert Woods and Brandin Cooks when asked about veteran wide receivers he turned to for advice during his eight years with the Los Angeles Rams.

The names of Tavon Austin and Sammy Watkins soon followed.

"A lot of guys have had a say and have shown me how to play this game," Kupp said on Wednesday, four days before he will play in his second Super Bowl. "I'm just really thankful for those guys for being (an) open book for me, because I know I asked way too many questions. But they never got upset with me about bothering them with those

things. And so it's a big part of why I want to be an open book for the guys here now."

Those guys would be the likes of Jaxon Smith-Njigba, Rashid Shaheed and Jake Bobo, the Seattle Seahawks' young receiving corps that Kupp guides as elder statesmen.

Many questioned whether Smith-Njigba could step into the No. 1 receiving role following the offseason trade of DK Metcalf and release of Tyler Lockett. While Kupp's 47 receptions during the regular season were his fewest in any season in which he played more than eight games, the 32-year-old's presence and versatility helped Smith-Njigba flourish into an All-Pro.

"It's been a blessing being able to work alongside Jaxon. I think he is an

incredible football player," Kupp said. "I've had a lot of guys that have put their arm around me and helped raise me up. It's a big part of why I want to be that same way for guys now."

Smith-Njigba has gone from 63 to 100 to 119 receptions through his first three seasons. He credited Kupp with aiding in his Year 3 leap to All-Pro and is "going to continue to learn and grow and ask a whole bunch of questions."

Kupp's influence has gone well beyond the receiver room. Quarterback Sam Darnold, who earned his second Pro Bowl nod this season, said Kupp's leadership spread throughout the entire facility.

"I can't speak highly enough of Coop and what he's meant to our offense.

Not only our offense, but our entire team," Darnold said. "The mindset that he has. The way he leads by example."

"But if he does say things, he's one of those guys where the entire room is dead silent. And then they're super focused on what he's saying because we know that he doesn't waste his breath. He's always going to be able to say something very, very mindful."

"I feel like he's had a huge impact on all of us in that building. We have a ton to thank for Coop and kind of what he's brought to all of us here in Seattle."

Signing with Seattle was billed as a homecoming for Kupp, who was born in Yakima, Wash., on the east side of the Cascades. He went on to star at Eastern Washington before

being selected in the third round of the 2017 NFL Draft, so he was immediately embraced as a fan favorite.

Kupp provided some insight into the sting of being released by the Rams last March after eight seasons.

"Just as a human, it's hard to know that what you've been a part of, what you've known for eight years, that you can't be able to be a part of that anymore," he said. "The most important things to me were those relationships that I had built with so many of the guys on the team and the coaches, people in that organization.

"Knowing that I wasn't able to come to work with those guys anymore, that was really, really difficult."

"And then there's the uprooting of your family. Like, 'Hey, well, work isn't here, I know that means that we're working somewhere else.' And so knowing that my boys weren't going to be able to be around their friends. My wife (wasn't) going to be

around her friends and her community."

"And so all that is tough. It's difficult. There's no doubt about it. But you move forward, you don't linger on that. You've got to be able to move forward. And I think about this journey and being here now."

Typically introspective, Kupp quickly turned the page to the opportunity in front of him in Super Bowl LX on Sunday. The last time he was on the game's biggest stage, Kupp earned MVP honors in Super Bowl LVI. That capped a year in which he produced the second most regular-season receiving yards (1,947) in NFL history and caught the game-winning touchdown in the Super Bowl.

Kupp is in a far different role in his ninth NFL season. But it's an important one as much more than just a mentor. He has nine receptions through the Seahawks' first two playoff games and will no doubt be targeted by Darnold in key situations come Sunday.



SILAS WALKER swalker@herald-leader.com

UK baseball coach Nick Mingione said he expects star recruit Matt Ponatoski to still play football and baseball in college.

FROM PAGE 1B

PONATOSKI

tionship with Stein.

Oregon, where Stein worked as offensive coordinator, was the other finalist for Ponatoski's commitment. Stein and Oregon coach Dan Lanning ended up taking a commitment from four-star quarterback Bryson Beaver before Ponatoski made his decision, paving the way for Ponatoski to pick Kentucky.

Mingione and the baseball staff played a key role in the recruitment of the Cincinnati native even when Stoops was still at Kentucky.

The baseball staff needs only to point to current shortstop Tyler Bell, the highest-drafted high school player in 2024 who chose to attend college, as proof it can showcase top prospects like Ponatoski. Stein's track record of developing quarterbacks into NFL draft prospects includes current Ducks star Dante Moore, who is projected as one of the top returning quarterbacks in the country for 2026.

"I recruited Matt at Oregon," Stein said. "He was somebody that we were super high on, really wanted. Ended up taking another kid just because of the timing of it out at Oregon, but had the relationship with him and his dad and mom. Great people. He is extremely accurate, throws the ball on time."

Both coaching staffs have insisted they expect Ponatoski on campus next fall, but there will be at least some tense moments waiting for the MLB draft to play out in July.

MLB.com does not currently include Ponatoski on its top 100 draft prospects list, but Baseball America ranks him as the 56th-best 2026 draft prospect entering the spring.

Ponatoski's draft stock could go up or down based on his performance as a senior at Moeller High School, but he is clearly already on the radar of baseball teams. Signing with a professional baseball team would not technically end his chances of playing

college football, but it is extremely unlikely any team that signed Ponatoski as an early round draft pick would agree to let him play SEC football due to the increased injury risk.

"Everything that he said to me is that he wants to be a big-time college football player," Stein said. "So is it concerning? No. I mean, I'm just really grateful to be able to have the chance to coach Matt. And I think his best years are to come in football."

"He is obviously an outstanding baseball player, and I would love to get him on the diamond here at Kentucky, too, and let's do this thing together."

If Ponatoski does make it to Kentucky as planned, his first impact is likely to come on the baseball diamond.

Stein and his staff signed Notre Dame transfer quarterback Kenny Minchey, who has two seasons of eligibility remaining, as the presumptive starter in 2025. Red-shirt freshman Brennen Ward and Marshall transfer JacQai Long will compete for the backup job in spring practice while Ponatoski is still playing high school baseball.

Ponatoski would be the most highly rated recruit of the backup options as a freshman, but missing practice and not focusing on football full-time might make it more difficult for him to win that job immediately. With Bell projected as a first-round draft pick this summer, Ponatoski could replace him as the baseball team's starting shortstop as a freshman.

"What a special talent," Mingione said. "...Think about this: As a junior in the state of Ohio - a junior - he goes out and is named the Gatorade Player of the Year in football, the greatest honor you can win. Well, then what does he do? He just follows that up, he goes out in the spring and dominates, and he's named the Gatorade Player of the Year as a baseball player. So, like, what do you think he's going to do? Play both."

Classified

classifieds.kentucky.com

FIND.
BUY.
SELL.

SELL
YOUR STUFF
FAST!
859.231.3100

VISA
MasterCard
Discover
American Express

Legals

Legals & Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Intent to Revoke Permit and Deny Permitting Actions

Thoroughbred Disposal LLC

Agency Interest No. 37952 / Application Activity No.

APE20260001 / Permit 034-00040

The Energy and Environment Cabinet, Division of Waste Management, Solid Waste Branch (Division) is hereby issuing a determination to revoke the solid waste permit issued to Thoroughbred Disposal LLC and deny applications APE20250002 (Permit Renewal) and APE20230002 (Horizontal Expansion). The permitted activities being revoked include the CDD Landfill > 1 Acre and the Emergency Disposal-SW activities. The permit revocation and denial of the two pending permitting applications will be effective April 7, 2026, pursuant to 401 KAR 47:140 unless the Cabinet issues a withdrawal of the determinations prior to that date. This action does not prohibit future application for a permit or registration by Thoroughbred Disposal LLC.

The revocation and two pending application denials are pursuant to 401 KAR 47:130, 401 KAR 47:140, 401 KAR 40:040 Section 1, and are based on the permittee's non-compliance with permit conditions resulting in the failure to protect human health and the environment, as well as violations of KRS Chapter 224 and 401 KAR Chapters 47 and 48.

The name and address of the facility is Thoroughbred Disposal LLC; 4179 Hedge-Lane; Lexington, KY 40516.

These actions are being processed at the Division of Waste Management, Solid Waste Branch. Anyone wishing to make written comments on any of the three actions may submit the comment(s) in writing to Danny Anderson, Branch Manager, Solid Waste Branch, Division of Waste Management, 300 Sower Blvd., 2nd Floor, Frankfort, KY 40601, no later than the close of business on March 9, 2026 the end of the 30-day public comment period. Please reference Agency Interest No. 37952 and Application No. APE20260001 on any correspondence.

The administrative record and can be reviewed at the Division of Waste Management's Frankfort office between 8:30 AM and 4:00 PM weekdays by appointment only. To make an appointment, submit an open records request, or request materials in an alternate format, submit a written request to eec.kora@ky.gov at least 72 hours prior to the desired review date.

Any person who may be aggrieved by these actions may file with the cabinet a petition which sets forth the grounds of the objection and demand a hearing pursuant to KRS 224.10-420(2).

The Cabinet does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status. The Cabinet provides, on request, reasonable accommodations necessary to afford individuals with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in all services, programs and activities. Publication of this notice is pursuant to 401 KAR 47:130 and 401 KAR 47:140.

Feb 6 2026

MASTER COMMISSIONER'S SALE

In order to comply with the orders of the Fayette Circuit Court, the Commissioner will sell the property described in the following action on **February 23, 2026**, at the hour of 12:00 noon on **ROBERT F. STEPHENS COURTHOUSE, FAYETTE CIRCUIT COURT BUILDING, 120 NORTH LIMESTONE**, Lexington, Kentucky. A bailiff will direct you to the appropriate room. Said property shall be sold to raise the amounts hereinabove set forth, together with interest and the costs of the action, and upon the (unless otherwise indicated) following terms and conditions. (A) At the time of sale the successful bidder shall either pay cash or make a deposit of 10% of the purchase price with the balance on credit for thirty (30) days. **In the event the successful bidder does not pay cash, the bidder will be required to post bond and furnish an acceptable surety thereon.** Said bond shall be for the unpaid purchase price and bear interest at the rate the judgment bears from the date of sale until paid, and shall have the force and effect of a judgment. (B) The purchaser shall be required to assume and pay all taxes or assessments upon the property for the current fiscal tax year (i.e. the amount that will be due thru June 30, 2026) and all subsequent years. All other delinquent taxes or assessments upon the property for prior years shall be paid from the sale proceeds if properly claimed in writing and **filed of record** by the purchaser within ten (10) days from the date of sale. (C) The property shall otherwise be sold free and clear of any right, title and interest of all parties to the action and of their liens and encumbrances thereon, excepting easements and restrictions of record in the Fayette County Court Clerk's Office and such right of redemption as may exist in favor of the United States of America or the defendant(s). "Master Commissioner Sales Are **Buyer Beware**" Sales. The Property is **sold "As Is"** **Where Is**. The condition of the property is not warranted by the Court, by the Master Commissioner, or by the Plaintiff. If you bid on property, you should have done your due diligence before you bid, not after!** FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THESE SALES AND OTHER UPCOMING SALES, AS WELL AS PAST SALES CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.FAYCOM.INFO. PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS ARE ADVISED AND ENCOURAGED TO REFER TO THAT WEB SITE FOR ANSWERS TO THEIR QUESTIONS.

1 - **440 WHITFIELD DRIVE**, 24-CI-03202, Principal to be raised \$113,097.94. Parcel No. 19983570

2 - **2260 DANFORTH DRIVE AND 2261 DANFORTH DRIVE**, 24-CI-04393, Principal to be raised \$10,000.00. Parcel No. 38182130 and 38182140;

TO BE SOLD TOGETHER AS A WHOLE

5 - **594 RADCLIFFE ROAD**, 25-CI-03832, Principal to be raised \$63,072.92. Parcel No. 10984000

6 - **3633 AMICK WAY**, 25-CI-04301, Principal to be raised \$200,415.13. Parcel No. 19977560

7 - **1307 STEPHEN FOSTER DRIVE**, 25-CI-04592, Principal to be raised \$221,073.88. Parcel No. 13952800

8 - **2121 NICHOLASVILLE ROAD, UNIT NO. 405**, 25-CI-01137, Principal to be raised \$38,590.88. Parcel No. 11302773

9 - **160 DEVONIA AVENUE**, 25-CI-03994, Principal to be raised \$42,960.01. Parcel No. 13526300

10 - **2121 LAKESIDE DRIVE**, 25-CI-03614, Principal to be raised \$1,517,834.66. Parcel No. 17095625

11 - **4808 DEDMAN COURT**, 23-CI-00272, Principal to be raised \$75,821.27. Parcel No. 22641600

12 - **644 NORTHSIDE DRIVE**, 25-CI-00301, Principal to be raised \$125,820.82. Parcel No. 22272650

JAMES H. FRAZIER, III MASTER COMMISSIONER

IPL0311365
Feb 6 2026

Notice

The Lexington-Fayette County Health Department's (LFCHD) most recent audited financial statement can be viewed on their website: <https://www.lfchd.org/about-us/>. The ad cost LFCHD \$164.05 and it was paid for by tax payer dollars.

IPL0310130
Feb 6, 2026

Notice of Self Storage Sale

Please take notice Citadel Self Storage - Lexington located at 133 N. Locust Hill Dr., Lexington, KY, 40509 intends to hold a public sale to sell the property stored by tenants for default on their rental agreement. The sale will occur as an Online auction via www.storage-treasures.com on 2/9/2026 at 10:00 AM. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Certain terms and conditions apply. 7568-33190

IPL0306836
Feb 6 2026

KENTUCKY.COM

being selected in the third

round of the 2017 NFL

Draft, so he was immedi-

ately embraced as a fan

favorite.

Kupp provided some insight into the sting of being released by the Rams last March after eight seasons.

"Just as a human, it's

hard to know that what

you've been a part of,

what you've known for