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The Winchester Sun

SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 2012

Kentucky advances, 102-90

Wildcats avenge loss to get into region final

ATLANTA – Revenge was sweet for Kentucky.

The Wildcats erased the pain of a buzzer-beating, one-point loss to Indiana earlier this year with a 102-90 victory over the Hoosiers in the NCAA South Regional semifinals this morning at the Georgia Dome. It ended more than three months of frustration for the Wildcats, who swore revenge wasn't a factor earlier this week despite the pregame hype surrounding the much-anticipated rematch.

Keith Taylor

It was hard to notice Kentucky wasn't thinking about its previous experience against Indiana.

Even Kentucky coach John Calipari denied the notion that avenging December's 73-72 was the motivating factor behind his team's performance in front of a Georgia Dome crowd that resembled a louder version of the team's Big Blue contingent at Rupp Arena.

By the final buzzer, they were loud and proud in a city known as "Catlanta" throughout Big Blue Nation. Kentucky has fared well in the Peach State and the successful trend continued against the Hoosiers when it mattered the most even under adversity.

"It was a war," Kentucky coach John Calipari said afterward. "Indiana played great and we just played a little bit better."

The last time Kentucky visited Atlanta, the Wildcats left town with the Southeastern Conference Tournament trophy in hand, sparking a memorable postseason run that propelled Kentucky to last year's Final Four in Houston. Now, the Wildcats are one game away from making a return trip to the national semifinals and will play Baylor in the region finale Sunday.

Although the final margin was by double figures, getting there wasn't an easy task for the overall top-seeded Wildcats.

Kentucky center Anthony Davis sat and watched the final 14 minutes of the opening half after picking up two fouls in the first six minutes. For the first time in the Big Dance, Davis was forced to be a spectator instead of a contributor.

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Michael Kidd-Gilchrist goes in for a layup, above. He scored 24 points and had 10 rebounds. At left, Terrence Jones reaches for a rebound. Jones had 12 points in the 102-90 win.

Photos by Clay Jackson

Team effort, free throws lead Wildcats to Elite Eight

PAUL NEWBERRY
AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Anthony Davis had a rather quiet night. No worries. He's got plenty of help at Kentucky.

The top-seeded Wildcats took care of the team that beat them back in early December and are off to another regional final, putting all their weapons on display in a 102-90 victory over gritty Indiana on Friday night.

Michael Kidd-Gilchrist scored 24 points and four other players were in double figures for Kentucky (35-2), which made up for a 73-72 loss back in early December.

Davis, the Wildcats' freshman star, wasn't a huge factor after picking up two early fouls, finishing with nine points and 12 rebounds. Kidd-Gilchrist took the starring role with a double-double, also grabbing 10 rebounds. Doron Lamb had 21 points, Darius Miller 19, Marquis Teague 14 and Terrence Jones 12.

Christian Watford had 27 points to lead the Hoosiers (27-9), whose comeback season ended two wins shy of the Final Four. Indiana, which won a total of 28 games the previous three seasons, has regained its usual place among the college basketball bluebloods under coach Tom Crean..

But Big Blue is moving on to its third straight regional final.

Kentucky will face Baylor on Sunday for a trip to the Final Four.

Indiana's freshman star, Cody Zeller, had 20 points, while Victor Oladipo chipped in with 15 before fouling out. Kidd-Gilchrist just kept pounding the ball inside, drawing foul after foul on the Hoosiers, then knocking down the free throws. He went 10-for-10 at the line.

Jones, who had only four points in the December meeting, signaled this would be a different night by scoring Kentucky's first five points in the rematch. That set the tone for a shootout, both teams running and gunning in an exhilarating display that kept fans in both blue and red on their feet most of the time at the Georgia Dome.

There wasn't much to fear on the inside in the opening half, not with the two big men, Davis and Zeller, both spending much of the period on the bench, each saddled with two fouls.

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UK to face Baylor in bid to reach Final Four

By LARRY VAUGHT
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ATLANTA — Kentucky had relied on its defense most of the season, but against Indiana Friday night it had to turn to the offense to win 102-90 and earn a spot against Baylor in the NCAA Tournament South Region final Sunday at 2:20 p.m.

A win then would send Kentucky to its second straight Final Four, but Baylor certainly made it clear it has no fear of playing the nation's No. 1 team.

Baylor, which beat Xavier 75-70 in Friday's first game lost three times to Missouri, twice to Kansas and twice to Iowa State — the team Kentucky beat last weekend in Louisville.

"I know Baylor is a long, athletic team," said Kentucky freshman Michael Kidd-Gilchrist after scoring a career-high 24 points and grabbing 10 rebounds against Indiana. "But we have a lot of different ways to win, too. I can taste the Final Four, but we still have to take it one game at a time. We can't think Final Four with Baylor next.

"We used a lot of energy playing this game, but I'll be fine. I'll be great. I could go all day, or all night. What time is it now? It's crazy to be up this late playing, but we won and now we have Baylor."

All five Baylor starters — junior guard Pierre Jackson (13.5), sophomore guard Brady Heslip (10.3), freshman forward Quincy Miller (11.0), senior forward Quincy Acey (11.5) and sophomore forward Perry Jones (13.4) — average double figures in scoring. Acy has 240 career dunks and is a 60 percent career shooter from the field. He has scored 1,318 points and has 805 career rebounds.

"Quincy (Miller) is my friend. It will be fun. I wish him good luck, but he knows I want to beat him," Kidd-Gilchrist said.

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BASKETBALL

Next game: Baylor
When: Sunday
Time: 2:20 p.m.
Radio/TV: CBS; 107.7 FM WKYN

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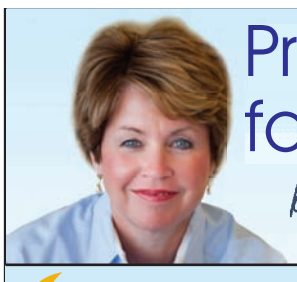

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