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Cats' Pause Publisher



Reservations For Three Months, Please

There are some smart people around the country, and then there are some smart people. I'm one of them.

I just put a call in to Atlanta, Georgia, for reservations although it took two hours to get a call through for some odd reason.

The operator at the other end answered, "my gawd, what's happened to all you people up there in Kentucky. Is somebody running you all out of there?"

The hotel switchboard was ready for a barrage of reservations Saturday, but they were not ready for me. She already knew what I wanted, what I would be doing in Atlanta on New Year's Eve and even had the cost ready for me. But she couldn't understand me wanting reservations for March.

"Hey, there's no way the partying will last that long," insisted the operator.

It took a while to convince her that she had better be prepared for a Kentucky take-over twice in three months. I reminded her of the NCAA basketball finals being staged at the Omni. Of course you know the Cats will be there too.

We were told the switchboards to Atlanta were humming as early as halftime of the Tennessee game with Kentucky fans seeking reservations.

How sweet it is.

I just wonder if they thought to make reservations for March at the same time.

Actually, I would have made reservations a couple of weeks ago for the Peach Bowl, but some friends of mine in the media tried to convince me plans should be made for Orlando, Florida. Me, I've always had a liking for peaches.

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"It's really unbelievable in view of the season last year," said a smiling Cliff Hagan in his athletic director's office Monday morning after the big 7-0 upset of Tennessee Saturday.

"I guess you would have to say it's a miracle," continued the former UK basketball All-American, "I remember I was a sophomore here at UK the last time we went to a bowl. It's been a long dry spell."

Hagan continued, "this does so much for our program, it's a tremendous boost to the whole school. I'm tremendously proud of everyone, it's been a great year and we look forward to playing in the Peach Bowl.

Hagan said the Marriott Hotel in Atlanta would be the official headquarters for the University of Kentucky

during its stay next month.

It's also the official headquarters for the Peach Bowl. North Carolina's headquarters for the event will be the Peach Bowl Hotel.

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Hagan announced today that Kentucky has been allotted 10,000 tickets for the Peach Bowl and they will be available on a first-come, first-served basis beginning next Monday, November 30, at Memorial Coliseum at 9 a.m. Tickets are \$9 each and there will be no limit to the number you can buy.

The AD also said Peach Bowl officials have assured him that additional tickets will be available beyond the first allotment.

Cash, money orders and certified checks will be accepted as payment for the tickets. Hagan also said mail orders would be accepted, but it should include fifty cents for postage and only money orders and certified checks would be accepted on mail orders.

Kentucky expects to have between 12,000 to 15,000 fans in Atlanta for the peach Bowl game on December 31. Kick-off for the game is 2:30 p.m. and will be televised by the Mizzouli Television Network, nationwide.

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We said it earlier in the year, long before the Wildcats compiled a 7-4

season record, but can anyone have anything but praise for a group of players and coaches who went from 2-8-1 last year to this season's success.

Without a doubt, Fran Curci has done the finest coaching job in the nation with what he had to work with and the off-field problems he was forced to contend with.

Just a couple of days before the big Tennessee upset, the Nashville Banner announced its annual Coach of the Year honors. Winning the award was Georgia's Vince Dooley who did a terrific job with the Bulldogs in winning the SEC. Coming in second to him was Fran Curci.

Had the vote been taken two days later, our man just might have won the honor.

As Jerry McCoin of Southeastern Football magazine said following the Kentucky-Tennessee game Saturday, "I don't know of a coach in the country who had done a finer job this year than Fran Curci."

When high school seniors decide to cast their lot for the next four years, I don't see how they can say no to Curci's Cats.

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Just heard the news our great senior tackle Warren Bryant has finally received the honors he deserves. An announcement will be made later this week that Bryant has been chosen an All-American by Kodak on the American Football Coaches Association list.

Oh, How I Love Those Cats

"Oh, my lord. How I loved those boys."

Those were the words echoed throughout the South and Kentucky in particular Saturday when the Kentucky Wildcats capped a miracle season with a 7-0 upset over Tennessee's famed Volunteers at Knoxville.

While any one of some 14,000 Kentuckians at Knoxville might have mumbled those words from a hoarse throat, it came from a man who has probably experienced more thrills and agony than any other Kentuckian.

It was none other than former Governor A.B. "Happy" Chandler.

Chandler, physically a muscle-man who is almost eighty, danced and pranced around the Shields-Watkins Field in Neyland Stadium Saturday afternoon almost like he had been given a second life.

"How da ye like that?" Chandler was asking everyone while he hugged

players and shook hands with coaches, "I knew we could do it all the time. Lord, this kind of a thing gets hard on a man's ticker but I believe I can stand it."

Happy was invited to witness the final moments from the sideline by Coach Fran Curci. Neither regretted it.

Later, Curci assigned the former governor with the task of carrying the game ball back to Kentucky. Happy truly was happy.

Moments later Happy left the then-empty Neyland Stadium with the game ball clutched under his arm.

As he was walking down a deserted street, a friend asked him what would happen if a disgruntled Tennessee fan decided to take the ball away from him.

"Just let one try it, and he'll get more than just this," said the happiest Wildcat fan of all, shaking his fist and flexing his muscles.

It's one of the most prestigious honors in America and there is no finer athlete than Warren Bryant. He was one who came to Kentucky four years ago with the ambition of turning the Wildcat football program around.

He has certainly accomplished that and he'll be turning around some professional program next season in the National Football League.

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Most of the Tennessee newspapers last week talked about the Vols' post season bowl plans with wins over Kentucky and Vanderbilt.

None mentioned Kentucky had bowl hopes of its own, with the exception of one story in a Knoxville paper on Friday. It said Kentucky had been in bowl consideration by the Tangerin people until they learned Kentucky would be placed on probation before a bowl game. Hogwash!

What really happened, Kentucky would have been interested in the Tangerine Bowl, only as a last resort. When Tangerine officials discovered that Kentucky didn't lean toward them, they tried to make it look like Kentucky would not be considered by the Florida folks.

It left a very sour (Lemon) taste in the mouths of Kentucky fans and a Tangerine Bowl official over the weekend offered a weak apology, saying there would have been a conflict with the UKIT which is scheduled for the same weekend in Lexington.

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It was a happy ride back to Kentucky Saturday night and some fans in rural Whitley County waited past dark to welcome their heroes. Three young boys equipped with a couple of flashlights, stood on a bridge crossing I-75 near Corbin and beamed a light on a banner which proclaimed: "Cats-We Love You."

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It's so exciting around the athletic department these days, one has to make hard decisions where to go.

The Wildcat Mat Team under coach Fletcher Carr opens its season this weekend with a great team and then there's the super affair at the Rupp Arena Saturday night.

It will be something else when the Big Blue races on the floor for the first leg of this year's exciting basketball season. See you at the game.