

On The Road To Success

After receiving back-to-back Hall of Fame Bowl invitations, the future of Kentucky football looks very enticing for Big Blue supporters. After all, the Cats were victorious in all four of their road games and this year's team was the first to accomplish that feat since 1912. Kentucky defeated border rival Tennessee in Knoxville and that hasn't happened since 1976. Also, it was the Wildcats' first victory over the Volunteers in three years. But more importantly, Kentucky finished .500 in the Southeastern Conference, which happens to play one of the better brands of football in the nation.



Todd Hallum

Cats' Pause Columnist

If Jerry Claiborne and staff wish to become a legitimate contender for the SEC championship, next year's recruiting class must be a decent crop. UK will have a junior-and senior-dominated squad for the 1985 season and this winter's signees will be called upon to replace those players that graduate. There's no question that Kentucky will receive favorable responses from in-state high school players but now the out-of-state recruits will realize that the Wildcats have one of the up-and-coming programs in the nation. With fan support at its highest in the last couple of years, the UK coaching staff will have to capitalize on the past two successful seasons and continue to ink top-notch players for the future. To compete with the top confederate teams such as LSU, Georgia, Auburn, and Florida on an annual basis, UK must sign at least a couple of blue-chip talents to rank among the higher echelon of the SEC.

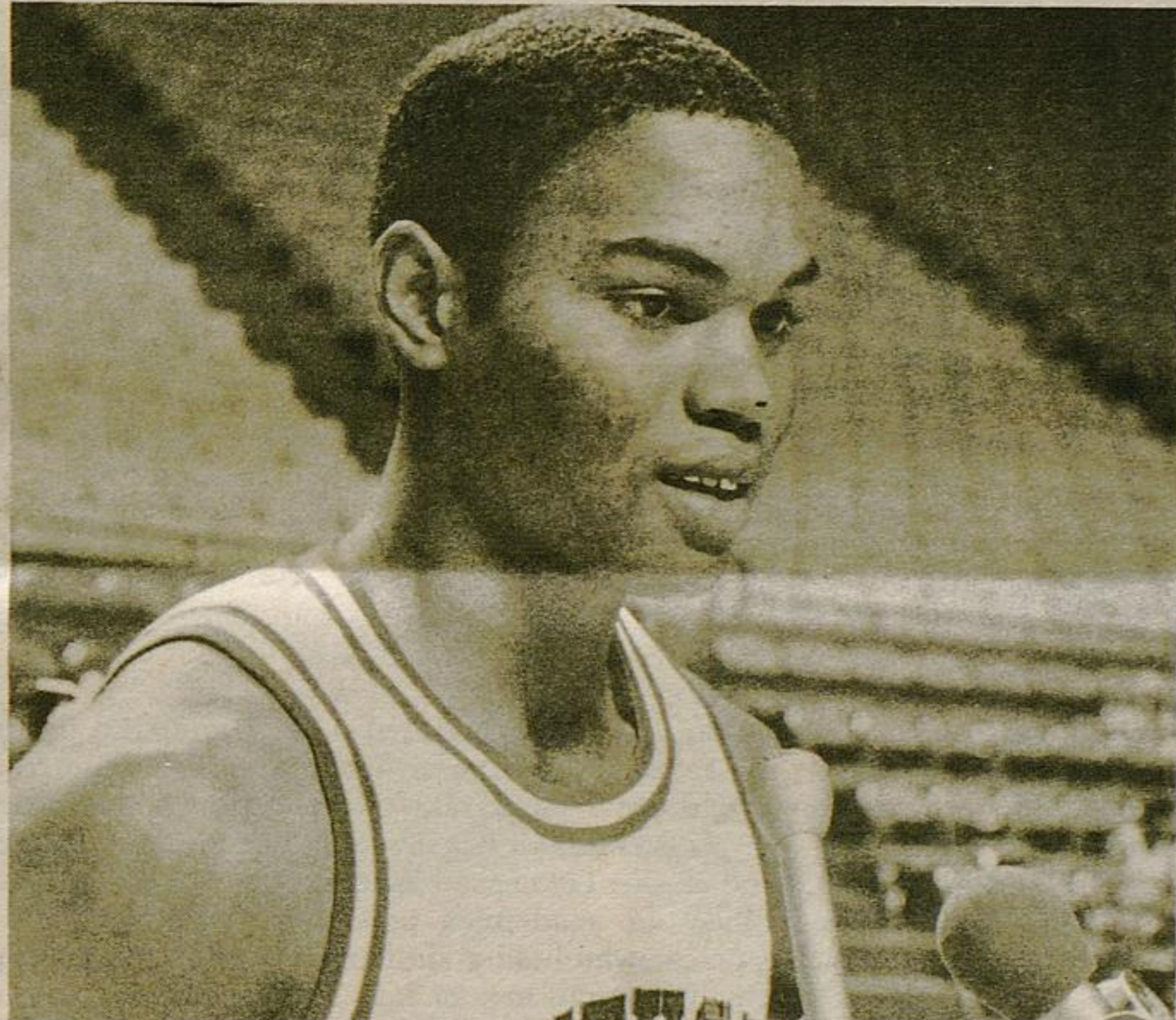
NO SURPRISE? The firing of Tulane head football coach Wally English was not surprising especially after all the problems which have occurred in the last two seasons in the Crescent City. If you recall, it was a Green Wave graduate assistant who got caught in the bushes of the Mississippi State practice field spying on the Bulldogs. Then, a few weeks later, English's son, Jon, challenged the NCAA transfer rule. Even though English knew his son was ineligible to play for the Green Wave, Jon English still stood over center for Tulane during the first half of the 1983 season. Finally, the antics of bush-league play by some of English's players was probably the straw that broke the camel's back for the coach. The NCAA doesn't keep this statistic, but the Green Wave probably led the country in unsportsmanlike conduct and personal foul penalties. Against Florida, the officials had to eject a Tulane player for unsportsmanlike behavior. In the game against Kentucky this season, the Green Wave was whistled for numerous personal foul penalties. Things got out of hand in the season finale against archrival LSU. With approximately 30 seconds remaining in the game, the contest was

terminated by the officials because of an ugly brawl which occurred after LSU had kicked a extra point that gave the Tigers a 33-15 margin. The incident was so bad that the police were called upon to break up the fracas.

With all the controversy that had occurred during the English regime, Tulane Athletic Director Hindmen Well simply got fed up with the numerous problems that had been laced upon the program. English compiled a 7-15 overall record at the Louisiana school, and home attendance figures were far below major college standards. By not winning many football games and not getting along with the A.D., English lost his job. Incidentally, Tulane appears on Kentucky's football schedule next season.

UK ROUNDBALL SCENE. This season, UK basketball followers will have to remain very patient with Joe B. Hall's Wildcats. Even though the Cats may not have a lofty record comparable to the past, this year's team should be very interesting to watch especially around the month of March.

For Kentucky to be successful, the Cats must run and get opponents to play at their tempo. Also, the Wildcats must create ways to get the ball to forwards Kenny Walker and Winston Bennett inside in their halfcourt offense, and rely on solid, aggressive defense to create easy points which definitely will be needed. Hopefully, UK fans won't expect too much from this club, especially in the early going of the season. And remember, the real season starts in March when the 64-team NCAA Basketball Tournament gets under way.



A Needed Return

Bob Watkins

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"He must have an aggressive approach to defense because foreign teams are used to scoring in the hundreds and are not experienced in playing against defensive coaches," McGuire says.

At this point McGuire got to the point, offering a list of nine candidates. Alphabetically: Lou Carnesecca (St. John's), Denny Crum, Joe B. Hall, Jack Hartman (Kansas State), Terry Holland (Virginia), Digger Phelps (Notre Dame), Norm Stewart (Missouri), Eddie Sutton (Arkansas) and John Thompson (Georgetown).

Based on the criteria offered (aggressive approach to defense, organization and international experience), Kentucky's Joe Hall looks to be well qualified. However, for motivational skills blended in with the emphasis on defense, Crum, Thompson and Sutton look to be the best to me.

Those on McGuire's list who merit only passing consideration are Phelps, Stewart and Carnesecca. I sense they were included by McGuire for "old times sake" anyhow.

What McGuire handbook would be complete without a Top 20. Georgetown, DePaul, Illinois, St. John's, Oklahoma, Duke, Indiana, Arkansas, Memphis State and SMU are the top 10.

McGuire picks Kentucky 12th because, in part "Kenny Walker and Winston Bennett could prove to be best pair of forwards in the land." He says freshmen Cedric Jenkins and Richard Madison "must grow up fast."

Comment: Right on the second, maybe on the first.

He ranks Louisville 20th but predicts the Cards will make it to the Final Four next March. "By January, they will kick into their whirlaway gear to get the momentum for the Finals in Lexington, 80 miles away.

McGuire's four "Rip Van Winkle sleepers" include Virginia Tech, Virginia Commonwealth, Kansas and Notre Dame. His six All-Americans are Chris Mullin

(St. John's), Johnny Dawkins (Duke), Wayman Tisdale (Oklahoma), Pat Ewing (Georgetown), Keith Lee (Memphis State) and Steve Alford (Indiana).

Sprinkled throughout the booklet are "quotations from Al McGuire." Here are two of the best.

■ Only God could be a good official. He's the only one who could please the other 50 percent.

■ Basketball players are made from April 1st till October 15 because from October 15 till the end of the season, they all practice equal time.

Requiem to Wilson

Chicago high school basketball star Ben Wilson was killed in a senseless shooting incident two weeks ago that shocked us all. Somehow the preseason synopsis in Street & Smith Magazine offered by Wilson's high school coach Bob Hambric on the player's talent is a fitting testament to the youngster. "He is a very spirited young man, very emotional and plays the game like Magic Johnson."

Parting shots

■ St. John's Coach Lou Carnesecca on the 28-foot coaching box instituted this year in college basketball: "Who suggested this, some hockey guy? They'll need a rope to hold me back."

■ Forward Orlando Woolridge of the Chicago Bulls on the attention being lavished on rookie Michael Jordan. "Traveling with him is like being on the road with the Jacksons. He's Michael, and we're the Jacksons."

■ Under the heading "It happens to the best" Dick Vitale, college basketball swami for ESPN-TV, had to eat a little crow last week when half of his much publicized top eight college teams lost. They were Illinois (to UAB), Memphis State (to Athletes in Action), Indiana (to U of L) and Oklahoma (to Illinois).

It's going to be a wild and crazy season, right Dick?

■ Iowa Coach George Raveling said it: "Lots of guys who believe in making the toughest schedule you can make are working at K-Mart now."

Comment: This season the Hawkeyes will play George Mason, Gonzaga and Georgia State, but that's standard. On its schedule top ranked Georgetown has Hawaii Hilo, St Leo's and American University. Illinois has Chicago State and Cal-State Chico.

And so it goes.