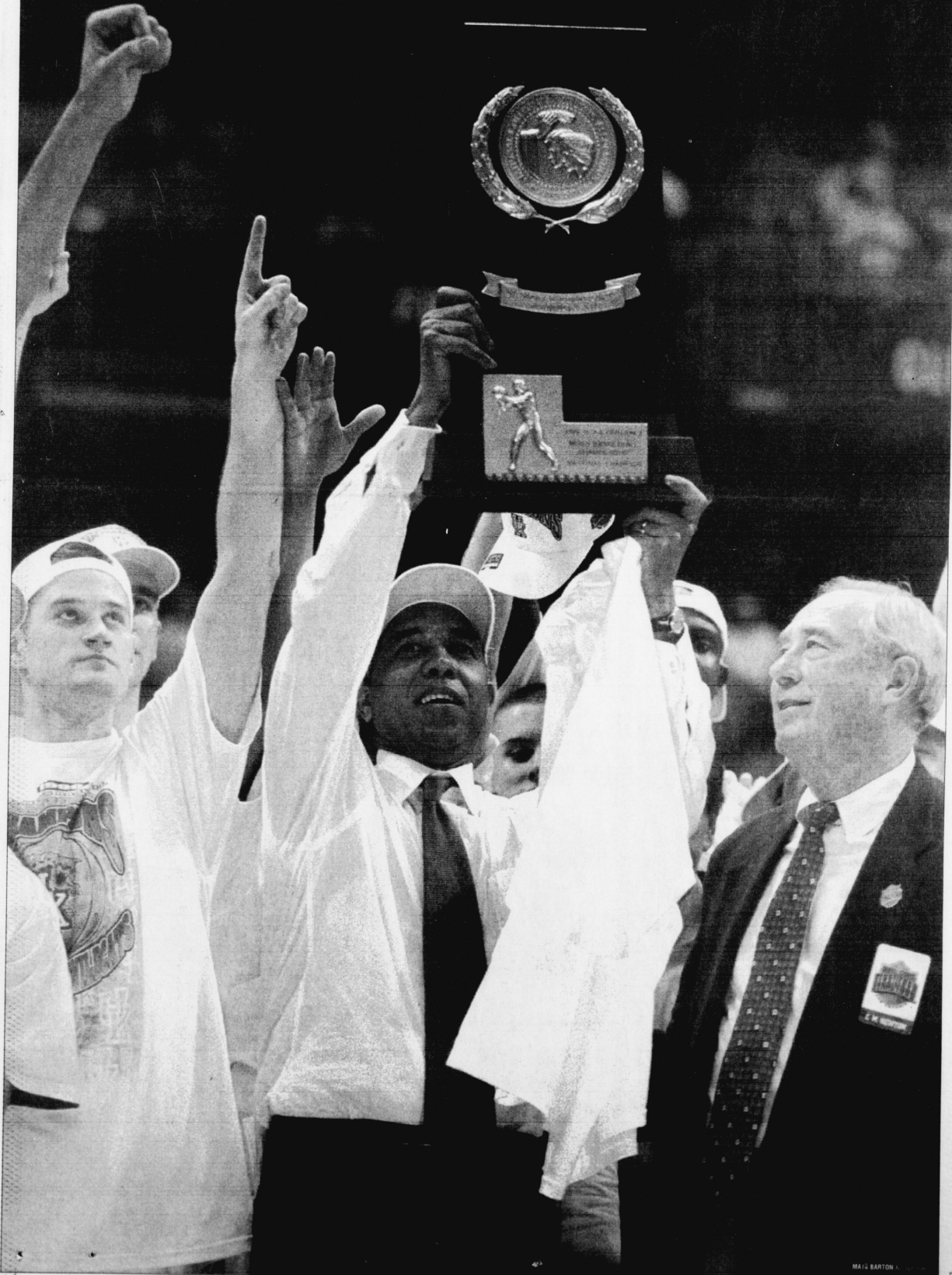


MAR 31 1998

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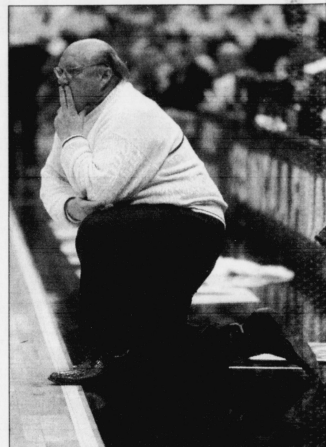


MAJ. BARTON

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31
98

Once again UK waged a 12-point comeback to eliminate Utah, earning its seventh national title

Cardiac Cats



PHOTOS BY MATT BARTON *Kentucky Kernel*
WISHFUL THINKING Utah Coach Rick Majerus watched from the sideline as the Cats dismantled his team, 78-69.

Cats' destiny date flawless

SAN ANTONIO — Welcome to the Golden Age of Kentucky hoops, where dreams blend with reality. After a season-long feast full of the sweetest echoes, Kentucky stood at destiny's altar last night deep in the heart of Texas. And after a suspense-inducing win over a cerebral and talented Utah team, these Cats placed their star in the hoops cosmos to twinkle forever.

Dynasties, like humans, normally have a biological clock. But this dynasty, in full bloom, keeps on ticking. For three years, UK has amassed 104 wins, just 11 defeats, three title games appearances and now two championships.

Living the life of a Kentucky fan is living in the land of endless treats. It's Halloween night followed by Christmas morning. It's candy and treasures in an uninterrupted flow of three-pointers, trapping defenses and dramatic victories.

Destiny's affection for this group, unlike the 1996 champs, didn't come at first sight. Destiny first became infatuated with this Kentucky team following the Southeastern Conference Tournament, where the Cats blazed through three opponents by an average of 22 points. In St. Petersburg, after the Duke miracle, destiny fell in love. Yesterday, destiny said, "I do."

Signed with a calligraphic flair, these Wildcats sealed their title-game victory with a collage of defensive intensity and a tapestry of clutch plays.

UK won despite Utah's perfect first half — in which the Utes shot 57 percent from the floor, allowed Kentucky zero points from the perimeter and held a jaw-dropping 24-6 rebounding bulge.

"Everybody stayed positive, nobody was down," UK's Allen Edwards said of UK's halftime disposition. "We knew we just had to keep fighting."

Every Golden Age has great philosophers capable of adaptation. Rick Pitino and Tubby Smith are the Socrates and Aristotle of this one.

Last night, facing a guided defensive mania scripted by Utah hoops magician Rick Majerus, Smith scrapped his original gameplan in the second half. With Utah sealing the perimeter from UK marksman Jeff Sheppard, Smith inserted a lineup more adept at driving to the basket (Sheppard, Edwards, Heshimu Evans minus a point guard).

Adaptive skills are underrated. Without them, Bill Clinton is just another horny guy.

As if following a well-rehearsed script, the Comeback Cats came back. Evans led the ascent from the grave — hitting two three-pointers and a driving layup in succession for the Cats. Utah's once formidable 47-37 lead was suddenly whittled to 50-45.

"They were out of shape and tired out there," Edwards said of the Utes. "And we just wanted it more."

Like the past 12 victims on UK's closing ride, the fatigued Utes were suddenly masters of all sorts of buffoonery. Andre Miller, Utah's normally steady point guard who finished with eight turnovers, fired up hopelessly errant shots. The Utah defense, so potent prior to halftime, suddenly became porous.

Cameron Mills, as he did in the Duke miracle, donned the hero cape once again. His first three-pointer tied the game at 58. His second sliced a Utah lead to 64-63. Soon thereafter, Sheppard hit a short jumper from the baseline.

UK could smell the caviar.

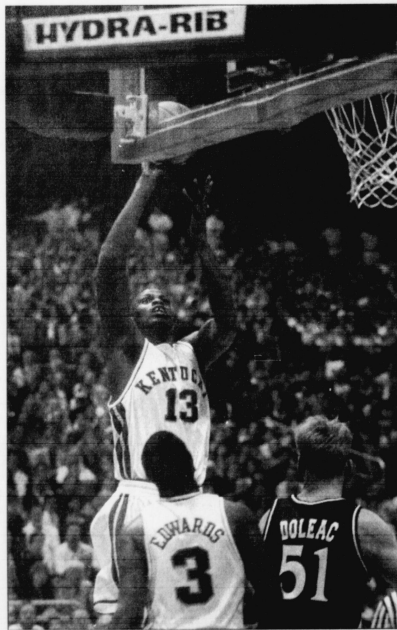
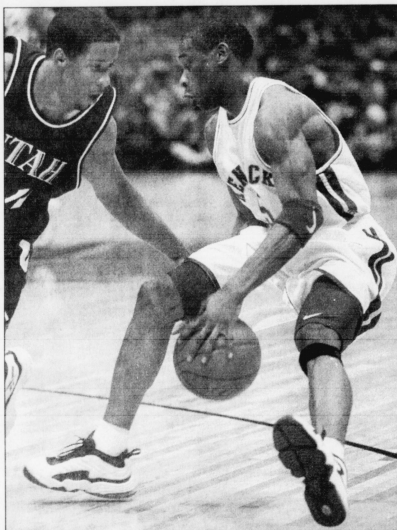
And so UK's 13th straight win, outlined in gold, ended merrily as the panoramic Duke and Stanford games did before. For the Utes, the loss was an added dash of salt to the NCAA wound UK has inflicted upon them four times this decade. UK is to Utah what Dwight Eisenhower was to Adlai Stevenson.

When the mind-bending afterglow of this victory finally fades, the enchanted echoes will remain from a team with the collective charm of Jack Dawson aboard the Titanic. They painted the court in sweeping brushstrokes and now their star will shine for eternity. Like the hero from any old western set in San Antonio, these Cats can now saddle up.

And ride into destiny's sunset.
Sports Columnist Eric Mosolgo is a UK graduate.



Eric Mosolgo
Sports Columnist



CHAMPIONSHIP FORM Point guard Wayne Turner (top left) went between the legs to avoid the defensive pressure of Utah's Andre Miller. Center Nizar Mohammed (above left) took a shot over UK's Allen Edwards and Utah's Michael Doleac. Mohammed finished with 10 points in 15 minutes of play. Backup center Jamaal Magloire (above right) went around Doleac for two of his seven points. Both Mohammed and Magloire used their size and strength to wear out the Utes' small bench and lack of size down low besides Doleac, who scored 15 points and nabbed 10 rebounds. Final Four Most Valuable Player Jeff Sheppard scored on a layup during the Cats' championship win last night.



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Chaos corner



PARTY CENTRAL Thousands of students (above) gathered once again at the corners of Woodland and Euclid to celebrate the Cats' win over Utah for the national title last night. Lexington police officers (below) kept a close eye on patrons at Steak Fest.

JOHNNY FARRIS *Kennel staff*

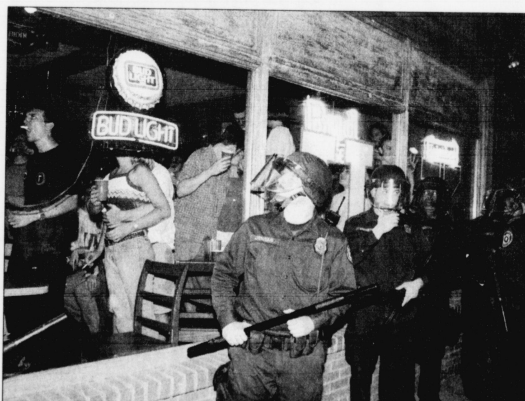
Students storm streets to celebrate seventh title

By Jessica Coy
 Assistant News Editor
 Jill Erwin
 Senior Staff Writer
 Mat Herron
 News Editor
 and Aaron Sanderford
 Campus Editor

Bedlam.
 Hysteria.
 An immense, seething, maniacal glob whose nucleus lies at the only intersection that matters.
 And when the horn bellowed "the end" in the second biggest state in the union, the glob from the Bluegrass riled, shook and teemed with celebration.
 Graphically, art education sophomore Amy Wagner utters, "This is fucking awesome."
 Truly.

Johnny Law has all but laid down his sovereign badge and melted into The Party That Killed '96.
 Students tote 12-packs of beer, liquor in brown-paper bags, down the streets to feed the massive cauldron of booze, joyful noises and if students were lucky, nudity.
 "This is my first time out here, and I've never seen anything like it," said Jonathan Goolsby, a foreign language and international economics freshman. "This is P-I-I-A-T phat; it's the phattest party I've ever seen."
 Among the insides of the pulsating, intensified mosh pit lies jesters in UK garb: white hats with blue Ks embroidered on them, and a shirt, proclaiming, um, something rather suggestive.

See CELEBRATION on 5



MOBIE HILER *Kennel staff*

Lexington gearing up for return

By Mat Herron
 News Editor

Win or lose, you have to come home sometime.
 The Cats will arrive at Bluegrass Airport today at 5:40 p.m. from San Antonio. Fans who want a glimpse of the boys in blue will have to refrain from rushing the terminal and park across the street at the main entrance to Keeneland racetrack at 4201 Versailles Road.
 "All the lots are full with chartered airplanes that have gone to San Antonio," said Karen Marcum, executive assistant for public relations at Bluegrass Airport. "If fans come here, you're going to get turned away."
 Fans who flew on one of the four charters by Commonwealth Travel took up most of the spaces in airport lot.
 Once off the plane, the team will board a bus and ride to the racetrack at 5:45 p.m.
 Keeneland "has more parking, aesthetically it's much nicer over there than looking through a chain link fence," Marcum said.
 The team will fly on a private plane, which doesn't come into an airport. Normally the players come in through Gate 51. "This week, their just getting straight on the bus," he said.
 Lexington Police will put about 15 officers out at the track to direct cars and keep people out of the bus' way. The other boys in blue will rush back to Rupp Arena to direct traffic and pedestrians to the pep rally. Twenty-two officers will patrol the outside and 10-15 on the inside, along with UK police and Andy Frain Security, which usually runs security during home games.
 "I don't expect it to be such a large crowd," at the airport, said Bill Burton, assistant chief in charge of bureau of traffic for Lexington Police. "It would be almost impossible for people to go to the airport and then rush back downtown."
 The big partiers won't be the ones turning out for the rally, an occasion mainly for families and youngsters, Burton said.
 The free tickets for the rally will be available beginning at 8 a.m. in the main lobby of the Rupp Arena ticket office. There's a four-ticket limit per person. For the early risers, doors will open at 6 a.m. Doors open at 6; the rally begins at 7 p.m.

Big Blue Bet

First it was Kentucky Ham, now it's the Kentucky Derby.
 Gov. Paul Patton and Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt have their own little wager going on, with Patton promising primo seats to watch the fastest two minutes in sports — The Kentucky Derby.
 Should the Cats roll the Runnin' Utes, Leavitt must fork over tickets for the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City.
 "Instead of a bet, we're referring to it as an expression of confidence," said Paula Ernstrom, communications assistant for Leavitt.
 The state just collected on its 65-59 win over the North Carolina Tar Heels Saturday night: A barbecue dinner, which the state will donate to a homeless shelter in Salt Lake Valley.

SGA candidates ready for possible second election

By Aaron Sanderford
 Campus Editor

Just when you thought it was safe to walk from the Classroom Building to M.I. King Library, Student Government Association candidates might be campaigning again.
 Josh Robinson's petition to overturn the entire election is gaining support on campus, even from winning candidates like Jimmy Glenn.
 Glenn won his bid for senator at large last week but signed Robinson's petition that calls for another election. Glenn's sister Kim also ran for office. She finished second in the SGA presiden-

tial race behind Nate Brown.
 "Jimmy and I talked about it, and if we do it again, who knows what will happen," Kim Glenn said. "Student government's purpose is to protect students' rights, not to infringe upon them, and if that means doing it again, he's willing to do it."
 Winners and losers must now wait for the SGA Elections Board of Claims to make a decision on the legitimacy of last week's election. Two SGA elections have been overturned since 1960. The board will also rule on alleged campaign violations.
 Complaints dealing with spe-

cific races or infractions have been filed. SGA officials had not received a copy of Robinson's complaint yesterday afternoon. Robinson said the document was going through final revisions.
 The deadline for filing complaints is 4 p.m. today, and the board meets shortly after to set a hearing time for the complaints.
 According to SGA bylaws, the hearing will be Thursday or Friday, and a written decision will be released within 24 hours of the hearing. Any decision by the board can be appealed to the SGA Supreme Court, whose decision is final.
 Third-place presidential candi-

date Joe Schuler said there is a good chance for a second election in a few weeks if you go by the merits of Robinson's claim. But he said waiting on a decision is nerve-racking.
 "It's been tough because after an election like this you try to win or lose start planning for what's next, but this time there was no closure," Schuler said. "We knew before they even announced the results that there was a possibility this election could be protested."
 President-elect Nate Brown said he knew not to take the election results as concrete. Brown said he was told the election might be contested just before winners

were announced last week.
 He is still recovering from last week, but he acknowledges the potential for another race.
 "I think it would be frustrating to pay up to \$600 for another campaign, to ask the same volunteers to help out again and to ask people to vote again," Brown said. "But I feel like if that's what's they decide is most fair and best for the students then Ernesto (Mansilla) and I are still excited and we still believe in what we have to offer the students."
 Current SGA President Melanie Cruz said campaigning again is a small price to pay.

"I know elections are difficult," Cruz said. "But if people are really serious about serving the students, this will not deter them."
 When asked about the potential for an even lower turnout than the 6.8 percent that voted last week, Cruz argued the opposite.
 "A lot of people assume that because voter turnout was so low that another election will not improve turnout, but if the students feel the election was unfair, they have a valid case that there should be a new election, because they want someone who was elected on merit and who follows all the rules," she said.

Students, local bars make best of viewing game

By Jessica Coy
Assistant News Editor

As UK hit the court, the band struck up a tune and hundreds of blue- and white-clad fans let out a roar and tipped up their cups.

Welcome to national championship night in Lexington.

Lexington Brewery Company may be thousands of miles away from San Antonio, but tonight it wanted to make the place feel like it were next door to the Alamodome.

"We want to bring the game to the crowd in a more solid way," said Tony Granados, a member of The Four Horsemen, a tuba quartet playing at the brewery last night.

Chad Pence, a music education major, said although it might be the beer more than the music that gets the crowd hyped, they don't mind.

"The music, beer and crowd make everyone feel almost as if they were really at the game," Pence said.

Next door at Buffalo Wild Wings, spirits were high and the 11 televisions could not be heard over fans who were yelling not only at each other but also at the game announcers.

As a round of Kentucky-blue jello shots made its way around the table, second-year nursing senior Shannon Thompson let out a whoop. "Go UK! Crush Utah. Bring home the championship!"

The chant was contagious and soon the whole restaurant joined in.

"This is just the beginning," said Misty Coyle, a family studies UK graduate. "Win or lose we're

partying at Euclid and Woodland later tonight."

Many students couldn't wait until the end of the game to make their way towards Celebration Corner. Several students who live on Euclid set up makeshift living rooms on their lawns, complete with couches, televisions and UK banners.

"We set the TV up out here because we couldn't fit everyone inside," said Adam Bourne, an English junior. "But we're definitely moving the TV back inside as soon as the game is over."

Walking down Euclid during the game last night you wouldn't have even needed a TV to know how the game progressed. Cheers and jeers could be heard wafting out of every window as UK made its moves on the court.

"We weren't even near a TV when the game started but we knew it had begun because we heard everyone screaming," said Marisa Feddock, a physical therapy freshman, who stopped at a lawn party to watch the game.

Business marketing senior Mike Gibson, who lives three houses down from the Euclid-Woodland intersection, said he brought the game outside so he could make it to the corner faster when the game was over.

"As soon as the final buzzer sounds the shit's gonna hit the fan and we are going to be right there," Gibson said.

Lynagh's and Steak Fest, which sit right at the infamous intersec-



GAME TIME

Students gathered at several local bars, in front yards and just about anywhere they could find to cheer and jeer as the Cats dropped Unab last night.

PHOTOS BY
HOBIE HILER
Kernel staff

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TALKING TRASH Students partied at Woodland and Euclid as cops looked on. As of presstime it was estimated that more than 18,000 people attended the after party.

Celebration

Euphoria abounds at Woodland-Euclid

From PAGE 1

"Utah sucks" on the front, "Duke swallows," on the back.

Drivers, yes drivers, honk again and again to push their way through the amoeba-like organism without trying to become a victim like the blue Volkswagen van almost totally submerged in the throng.

In front of 270 Kentucky Ave., minstrels stretch out their instruments and jam.

A beer-filled squirt gun finds its target in several parched mouths.

Toilet paper sails from above the rooftops as the fiddlers are dancing and cheering. Fireworks scream and pop.

Three helicopters circle to catch this glob in action.

"I always knew UK would win," said business freshman Jason Snipes, "but Utah kind of scared me."

What's scary is a Utah fan in Lexington.

The glob grows, spreading up to High Street, over to Aylesford, where side of the street screams "blue," the other "white."

Back and forth.

It spreads up Woodland, so close to South Campus it can almost kiss it. Thirty Lexington police officers guard the William T. Young Library.

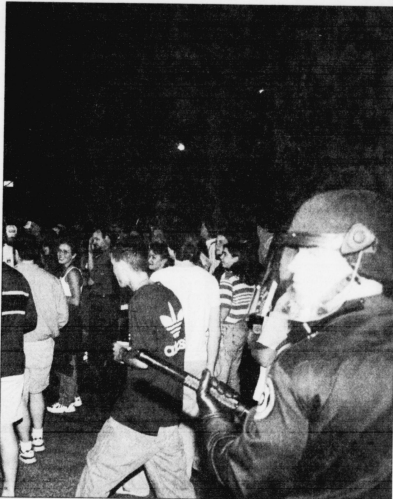
Sgt. Artie Green, a veteran on hand from the '96 inaugural madness, observes the situation.

"The crowd didn't go any further than SuperAmerica," he said. "This crowd looks a lot bigger."

And so it grows, Past Kentucky Avenue almost to Lafayette. Almost to Republic Bank's corner.

A lady meanders the crowd with two bumper stickers that boast a new saying in blue letters soon to be on the edge of Kentucky lips:

"Cats Antonio '98."



PHOTOS BY JOHNNY FARRIS *Kernel staff*

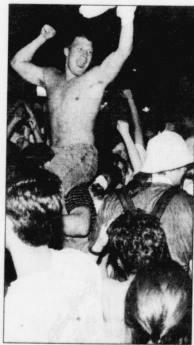
"It's insane, crazy, incredible. Me and my buddies just came out and hang out and drink a lot of beer," said anthropology senior Shane Hinkle. "We thought we would come out here for awhile."

Exactly. Awhile. A voice from Final Fours past adds his congratulations.

"I'm just happy for Jeff, Allen, the rest of the guys," said ex-UK point guard Anthony Epps. "When coach P left, people didn't really give us a chance to be back, but you've got to give a lot of credit coach Smith; he did a great job."

The mix, some say, might continue into the wee hours of the morning. But there is no place psychology junior Lauren Higdon would rather be.

"Wow."



Fans bare all in support of UK

By Jill Erwin
Senior Staff Writer

"Show me your tits!"
The chant goes up every year about this time on Celebration Corner. Girls propped up on guys' shoulders satiate the crowd's appetite for skin by flashing the students gathered below them.

"I'm one of the greatest UK fans around," said Amber Owen, a journalism junior, "and I am all for fans showing their support, but without showing body parts. But hey, if that's what some girls want to do, more power to them."

However, not everyone thinks public nudity is the way to go.

"Never," said Lindsay Grinstead, an elementary education junior. "I respect my body."

Obviously many females in the crowd shared her ideals. For every girl on someone's shoulders, there were hundreds more on the street, celebrating with alcohol and all

their clothes.
"I don't think that's a very appropriate way to celebrate," Karla Wright said.

Wright, a first-year pharmacy student, had a simple goal when she and her friends hit the streets.

"I'm just out here to watch everybody," she said.
Last night's crowd did not seem as intent on seeing skin as some of their predecessors, perhaps because of the effort it took UK to win the title.

In the past, the Cats cruised to the championship game with hardly a test, but this year was all too different.

Students were still coming

down off the emotional roller coaster that was this year's run to the title.

Three games decided by 12 points can do that to a heart.

Mike Lloyd, a finance junior, agreed with the fact that the celebration dealt more with the title itself and less with the search for more excitement.

"Nobody expected us to be here," he said.
Not surprisingly, the tendency to bare all met with almost disapproval from the male portion of the crowd.

Lloyd said it's all a part of winning a championship.

"Everyone's just celebrating," he said. "It's just awesome. It's the best."

☝☝
I am all for fans showing their support, but without showing body parts. But hey, if that's what some girls want to do, more power to them.
Amber Owen
journalism junior

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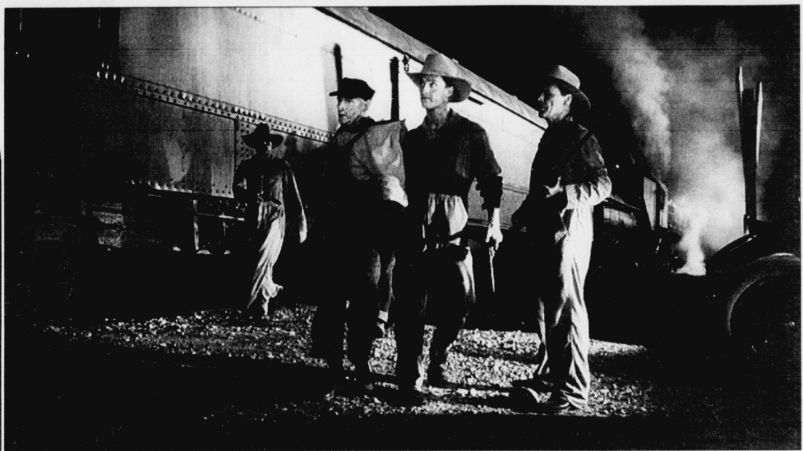
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PRETTY-BOY BAD GUYS Matthew McConaughey, Ethan Hawke and Charles Gunning star in 'The Newton Boys.' The film plays at South Park and Woodhill.

Linklater is lackluster in major movie debut

By Matt Mulcahey
Senior Staff Critic

Sooner or later, most independent directors sell out their integrity and give into the money and glamour by "going Hollywood." With *The Newton Boys*, Linklater leaves behind his exceptional ability for realistic dialogue and characters.

Although he takes his gift for re-creating the past, as in his tribute to the '70s *Dazed and Confused*, with him to the depression era setting of *The Newton Boys*, Linklater leaves behind his exceptional ability for realistic dialogue and characters.

The Newton Boys tells the true story of four Texas farmboy brothers who became the most successful bank-robbing team in

American history. But their story isn't all that interesting. No explanation is given for the beginning of the spree, and the backgrounds of the brothers are never thoroughly explored, rendering the characters as underdeveloped, one-dimensional caricatures.

Most of the heist jobs are pulled at night, resulting in few gun fights, car chases or anything else remotely interesting.

During a trip to Canada, when one of the robberies finally goes wrong, the scene is played for laughs instead of drama, leaving the movie without the necessary action to distract from the underwritten characters.

The Newton Boys moderately succeeds as a showcase for some of

Hollywood's brightest young stars. Matthew McConaughey, who got his big break in Linklater's *Dazed and Confused* as a long-since graduated student with a thing for young girls, is solid as the oldest brother. With every role, though, it seems more and more like McConaughey is a one-note actor with limited range.

The same can be said for co-star Skeet Ulrich, who seems to do nothing more than imitate the talented Johnny Depp every time he's on screen. Both are decent in their roles, but both of these actors need to stretch a little.

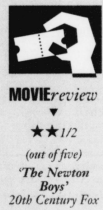
Perhaps they can learn from versatile co-star Vincent D'Onofrio. Although he'll probably forever be remembered as Private Pyle in Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*,

D'Onofrio transforms physical-ly and emotionally for every role and *The Newton Boys* stands as yet another example of his chameleon-like ability.

The saving grace of *The Newton Boys* lies in the performance of Ethan Hawke as the carefree, heavy-drinking Jess Newton.

Hawke steals every scene he's in with a mix of charm, humor and wit that make him one of most underrated actors working today.

Despite its many faults, *The Newton Boys* has its moments. The young actors do have good chemistry together, and the period detail is excellent. But the movie merely cements the turning of yet another gifted director to the "dark side" of Hollywood movies.



MOVIE review
★ ★ 1/2
(out of five)
'The Newton Boys'
20th Century Fox

Face to Face plays Bogarts

By Mary Dees
K&G Editor

Despite three major albums, four years of touring and co-headlining the Warped Tour for three years, Face to Face has remained one of the few punk bands out of Southern California not to make a major "sell-out" name for themselves.

In a news release, Face to Face said it has achieved this status by "touring endlessly and building a core fan base that the band speaks in reverential tones."

For those who remember seeing this band for the first time for about \$5 in a half-full concert hall; this tour should be a change. Now touring with Reverend Horton Heat, Face to Face is bound to fall into a respectable category that they deserve.

Face to Face hails from Victorville, Calif., 88 miles west of Los Angeles. The band was organized as

part of the punk-rock revival of Southern California, but says it doesn't fit the stereotype of punk rockers and was never hardcore fans of the music at first.

Trevor Keith, the band's lead singer, said he was a big fan of Ozzy Osbourne in high school and later turned to bands such as the Cure and the Psychedelic Furs.

"I even started a band that sounded like those groups, but it turned into punk rock once I got my hands on a Bad Religion tape," Keith said.

"There's a lot of different genres of punk rock. For the most part we don't fit into 98 percent of them. We're playing melodic music. The only thing that's punk rock about it is the speed and energy with which it's played," he said.

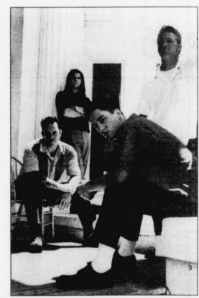
This is one of the reasons Face to Face has received so much success. The band gives a nice high

energy speed similar to punk rock, but also gives a melody more akin to pop and rock. The group blends the two styles that leaves listeners with an upbeat punk rock sound and a catchy beat and tune minus the hardcore screaming.

Face to Face began seven years ago and has since produced three albums and a live compilation, recorded at the Romy Theater in Los Angeles. Keith said the CD features "something for everyone" including rare, non-album songs like "Dissension" and "Not For Free."

"This is just a sample of the lyrics that represent Face to Face as a band with more of a punk-rock sound, with poetic lyrics and a rock genre."

Face to Face rides the fence between sell out and true-to-form punk band. It blends its sound between rock and punk. Although it seems to border on numerous issues, it is definitely an above-



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NEWT AND GERM

by BENJAMIN HOPPER



'Nothin' but fun'

Sigma Field Day offers chance for community, UK unity

By Jill Erwin
Senior Staff Writer

Sharon Harris was in a world of her own.

While the rest of the kids who had gathered Saturday for the Phi Beta Sigma social fraternity "Field Day" had moved to the kickball field, 10-year-old Sharon was sitting in the middle of Haggin Hall's volleyball court, burying her feet in the sand.

"I didn't want to come here when I first found out," Harris said, "but I'm glad I did."

The Sigmas joined forces with members of the Campus Crusade for Christ to offer a day of fun for youths from the Bluegrass-Aspendale and West End areas of Lexington. Between the volleyball, kickball, races, hot dogs, hamburgers and chips was a lot of laughter and fun.

Following the cookout, the children participated in general field day activities, including the three-legged race, the crab race and relays. First, second and third-place ribbons were given out in each race. Sigma President Ricky Stone

said the day went well.

"They were quite happy," said Stone, a history senior. "Hopefully they were worn out, too."

Sigma assistant graduate advisor Lezell Lowe contacted the heads of the youth organizations to find participants for the fourth annual gathering.

"We decided we wanted to do an event that brought the youth of Lexington together," said Lowe, a health administration graduate student. "We wanted to provide an outlet for children in a community that is often overlooked. We would do it if no one else came."

Tanya Clark, the project coordinator for the Division of Youth Services, found out about the project Friday.

"We managed to get around 40 kids out here on one day's notice, so think of what we could have done with more time," Clark said.

Clark saw the day as a chance to show the kids that there are ways to have fun. The students ranged in age from 9-17 years old.

"In Lexington, there's really not much to do, especially as far as structured activities, unless it's on

their own," Clark said.

One of the programs involved with Lexington youth is the West End Community Empowerment Project. Director Dora Hudson had a previous involvement with UK.

In January, the Sigmas held a tutorial for the students in the program, offering their help and companionship for the children. Also, Sandra Cairo, director of the King Cultural Center, held an African Dance class during Kwanzaa.

"We brought them here for the socialization, the personal interaction and the chance to intermingle with college students," Hudson said. "Most of all, it was for the recreation."

Harris wasn't the only one taking advantage of the opportunity to have fun. Nine-year-old Whitney Combs enjoyed the Frisbee toss a lot, but don't think that's all the fun he had.

"I like to play volleyball, too," Combs said with a huge smile.

Sigma Vice President Wil Prinkleton, a political science junior, saw a benefit beyond the social interaction.

"This was a coming together

experience," Prinkleton said. "It's letting people understand that fraternities and sororities are not just about being social, but we try to give people a better outlook, especially in the inner city."

While the Sigmas had worked on this for four years running, Campus Crusade didn't find out about the venture until Thursday night's meeting.

An announcement was made, and the members were told that anyone interested in coming down and spending time with the kids was more than welcome. Some took the opportunity to enjoy the weather and help kids at the same time.

Ryan Flannery and Mike Riddle were two examples. Flannery, a mathematics senior, has worked at Christian athletic camps for four years running, and Riddle, a secondary history education senior, is a member of the UK football team.

"We just want to show them a good time," Riddle said. "Out here, our main goal is to have fun and to learn sportsmanship."

"If you've ever seen a child smile, this is where you want to be," Lowe said. "This is nothin' but fun."

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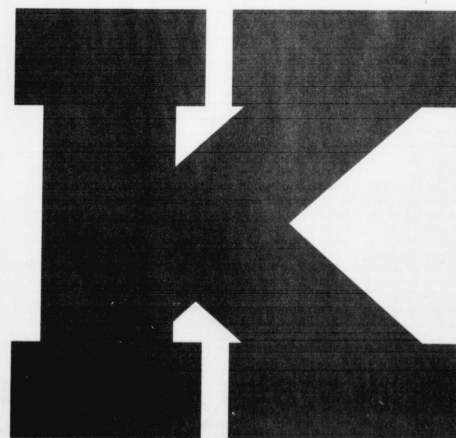
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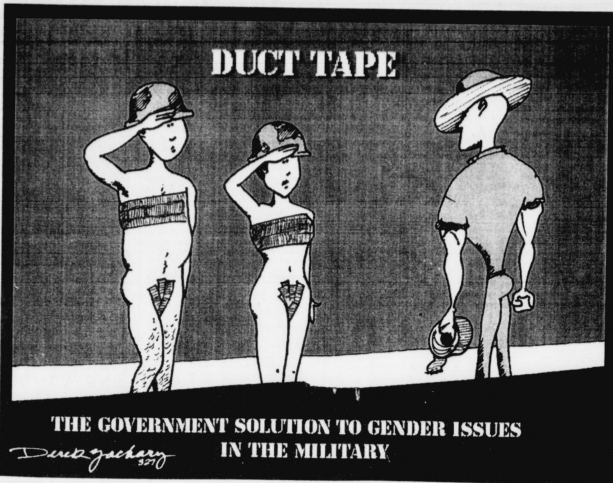
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ViewPOINT



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SGA blues

It was too good to be true: A year without public incident to mar an otherwise great year for the Student Government Association. Each year, when SGA elections wrap up, there are almost always complaints about the voting process or campaign tactics that fall outside the rules, whether intentionally or by accident.

SGA Elections Board of Claims and the SGA Supreme Court to ignore. In fact, it's very likely that the entire election will be thrown out and a new election scheduled.

This is because the most serious complaint notes that the SGA constitution requires elections to be held on the eighth and ninth days following spring break. However, the SGA election was held on the third and fourth day, thus allowing candidates only Monday and Tuesday to campaign prior to election.

IN OUR OPINION

Some have tried to argue that the dates were legitimate because the SGA offices were open during Spring Break. Give us a break, that sounds like an excuse the Administration would try to sneak by us.

And don't even try arguing that the voting machines weren't available on the eighth and ninth days. The SGA regulations are quite clear and if SGA chooses to violate its own constitution (as it did last year) or if it is unable to comply with its provisions due to extenuating circumstances then perhaps it's time to amend it so we can avoid a repeat of this next year.

READERS' forum

Zurcher misses the mark on UK's ecstatic b-ball fans

To the editor:

Many people write into the Kernel to get attention or to piss people off. But when you talk about the UK Wildcats and their fans, you have gone too far.

We are supposed to support our athletic teams. One would think that a member of the football team would understand this. After all, the fans reacted the same way to the Alabama football defeat as they did the Duke basketball defeat. When fans were chanting "Alabama Sucks," no one heard Jeff Zurcher complaining.

In the Kentucky media after the Duke game, there was nothing but praise for Coach K and his Duke team. He is a fine coach with fine athletes, but the UK fans were tired of having the '92 game thrown in their face by every member of the media.

Since 1992, the Laettner shot is shown before virtually every NCAA basketball game. In 1998, we finally got our revenge and had reason to cheer. It says a lot for the Duke team that UK fans considered beating them reason enough to brave the riot police on the corner of Woodland and Euclid.

As for media coverage, how much does the UK men's basketball team get outside of Kentucky? Not much considering Billy Packer calls all of our games on CBS. He is one of the many adamant UK-haters. UK basketball is continuously dumped on by the media because of our traditional winning program. What little coverage UK does get, it deserves because the players and coaches have accomplished some amazing feats since probation.

Coach K truly is a class act and a great coach. However, should we really compare coaches by how many titles they have?

For instance, if you look at what Pitino did, he rebuilt the program from nothing. Granted, he didn't do it alone, but without him, would it have been possible? Coach K did not have to overcome such great hurdles.

Next, is the fact that since Georgetown won their championship they have been the top story on the news. The Scott Co. Cardinals were also a top story because of their state championship. As for Kentucky Wesleyan, many area viewers watched the game nationally televised and cheered them on.

UK fans are not only Wildcat fans, we are basketball fans. When we attended the SEC tournament last year, UK fans outnumbered all others at ALL games. Also, we support our Cats no matter whether they win or lose. We were born to bleed blue, but you wouldn't know you're from Indiana.

Christy Jones kinesiology sophomore

Nicole Fortner accounting sophomore

TALKback!

Readers are encouraged to submit letters to the editor and guest opinions to the Viewpoint page in person or by mail.

Address your comments to "Letters to the Editor," Kentucky Kernel Editorial Editor; 35 Enoch J. Grehan Journalism Building; UK; Lexington, Ky. 40506-0042. Send electronic mail to kernel@pop.uky.edu

Letters should be approximately 250 words; guest opinions should be no longer than 850 words.

All material should be type-written and double-spaced, but hand-written will be accepted if it is legible.

Include your name and major classification (for publication), as well as your address and telephone number for verification.

Check out the Kentucky Kernel on-line at www.KyKernel.com for more letters to the editor.

Saying goodbye to love requires heart of a lion

There's no starting over after betrayal of intimate trust

How do you measure courage? Is it how many beers you can shotgun? Or how much pot you can smoke? Or how many running backs you can tackle? Or how many points you can score?

Or how much you love someone? When someone cheats on you, you learn courage the way no professor can ever teach it.

In seconds, you're allergic to liars. You wait for another reason to forget your girlfriend was drunk and stoned and slept with a guy she has never and will never love like she loves you.

But none of the reasons satisfies you. You remember the 3,000-mile trip across eight states in your '92 Honda Accord and how nothing tops cruising at 75.6 mph through the Pocono Mountains in eastern Pennsylvania and then looking to the passenger seat to find her sawing 1,200 logs.

Even though the radio's cranked.

You remember when she sent you hundreds of drawings she ripped out of coloring books, signs that read "I love you so much that I drew you a picture," and "Hang in there Mat, only 18 more days until Spring Break," signs that left you wondering how she could mix magenta and chartreuse.

You remember her begging you to come visit the kids she worked with because they all wanted to meet you. She sent you pictures they colored, as if to prove how anxious these four-year-olds were.

You remember when she would ask you over and over and over and over and over could she please smoke just one cigarette 'cause she's crazy-wacked out from nicotine not chattering a course of ecstasy down her throat. And you still said no because late at night when you stared at her you heard her breathe that deep, conquering breath a breath so forceful it could suck a thought right out of your mind.

And then you remember, sitting over a bowl of charcoal hot chicken noodle when she drops

the line, your heart stops on the line: "Don't get freaked out but I'm seven days late."

And you know what that means 'cause you grew up with two older sisters that acted real funny around a certain time each month, that time when you were five and six and the only thing you knew was that your sisters were just being that way and had that whole thing going on.

And you didn't know; what the hell do you know when you're five and six besides Saturday morning cartoons?

Total recall sets in. Recalling every single weekend for the last two months you guys have been dating. Every time you slept together. Every time. And you recited like a mantra to yourself that it couldn't be yours because you had always used a condom, never would chance it even if 350 million people were standing around you screaming, "Just relax, you'll pull out in time."

But the facts don't calm you down. You are insanely keyed up. Can't sleep, can't eat without wanting to vomit. Because you're 19. Nineteen. You've got goals. You want to be a journalist, a social worker, a teacher, a biologist, a cop, a city councilman. This is something that happens to people who don't know what they want to do, right? Something that happens to the irresponsible.

But she cheated. And she's pregnant. And it's not yours.

You're a combination of relieved and sad and pissed. You're a dead body on a railroad track, bleeding from a gash in your head. You're the loser in a bar fight. You're hanging by one foot upside down over a cliff. Your tears scrape so relentlessly against your eyes that you can't see.

"I love you, and I know you don't believe that right now..." And you don't. You don't use I love you as a practical joke. You don't use I love you when networking for a job. You don't use I love you to get to heaven quicker. And you sure as hell don't use I love you as an excuse.

"I love you, and I know you don't believe that right now..." It's the most vulnerable power trip you with all the anger; she, all the regret. Courage. It hates cowards, loves backbone. And it is a quality to consider, when you're alone with your girlfriend, or boyfriend or wife and you lean over to whisper I love you and kiss them goodnight.

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INFORMED SOURCES

"WE WANT you to own a skunk because you love one."

Jane Bone, on the National Skunk Show in Georgia where skunks are judged for personality, talent and physical markings.

Minimum wage laws doom graduates to mediocre pay

Did you ever stop to think what good (or bad) a minimum wage law is?

Well take a moment to think about it. For one thing, it is a law that forces employers to pay an amount per hour for labor whether it is worth it or not.

It takes away the right of the employer to limit beneath a set value the price for work.

To me this screams: It pays to be uneducated.

Now here we are in college, busting our butts to earn little more than what we could have by just flipping burgers. I have a friend who works for \$6.50 an hour after spending five years earning a degree. So what's the point?

What are the odds that you, one out of thousands a year graduating from college, will end up with a job that actually pays?

Very small chance indeed. In fact, many graduating with degrees (some with double majors even) end up spending more than a year trying to find a job and end up working in a field unrelated to their degree.

Sad isn't it? We have this impression that if you go to college you are "making something of yourself."

I enjoy my college education and think it has done a lot to round out my character. But financially will it pay off? By merely attending college, do you automatically have a better financial status? Well, I hope my degree will find me a job, but what about those in education, biology and other already saturated fields of employment?

Something is wrong when you can earn \$5.15 an hour straight out of high

school versus spending loads of money for a college education that may only earn an additional dollar an hour.

This forced re-allocation of financial resources encourages students to end their educations early.

It says that 16 to 18 years of learning really is no different than 12 years of learning.

And if the majority of people are earning the same money for different levels of education, then it is also saying that effort and time expended on education are unimportant, but that financial equality is important.

I would hate to see our society turn socialist, but when you start putting tabs on even such a "menial" thing as wages, it is one small step towards just what a

socialist society.

The biggest "advantage" to minimum wage laws is that they, obviously, help out those that are at the bottom rung of wages. But I don't see this necessarily as an advantage.

If a company has a certain amount of income that can be spent on wages, and the minimum wage goes up, they would then have fewer people that could be hired.

In other words, you have same amount of money being spent on fewer amount of workers.

The people that are kept on payroll are better off with the higher pay per hour, but also unemployment has destroyed those that were let

go. I'm not talking out my butt here people.

I have a friend who works for \$6.50 an hour after spending five years earning a degree. So what's the point?



Stephanie Clark Contributing Columnist

Contributing Columnist Stephanie Clark is a pharmacy student.

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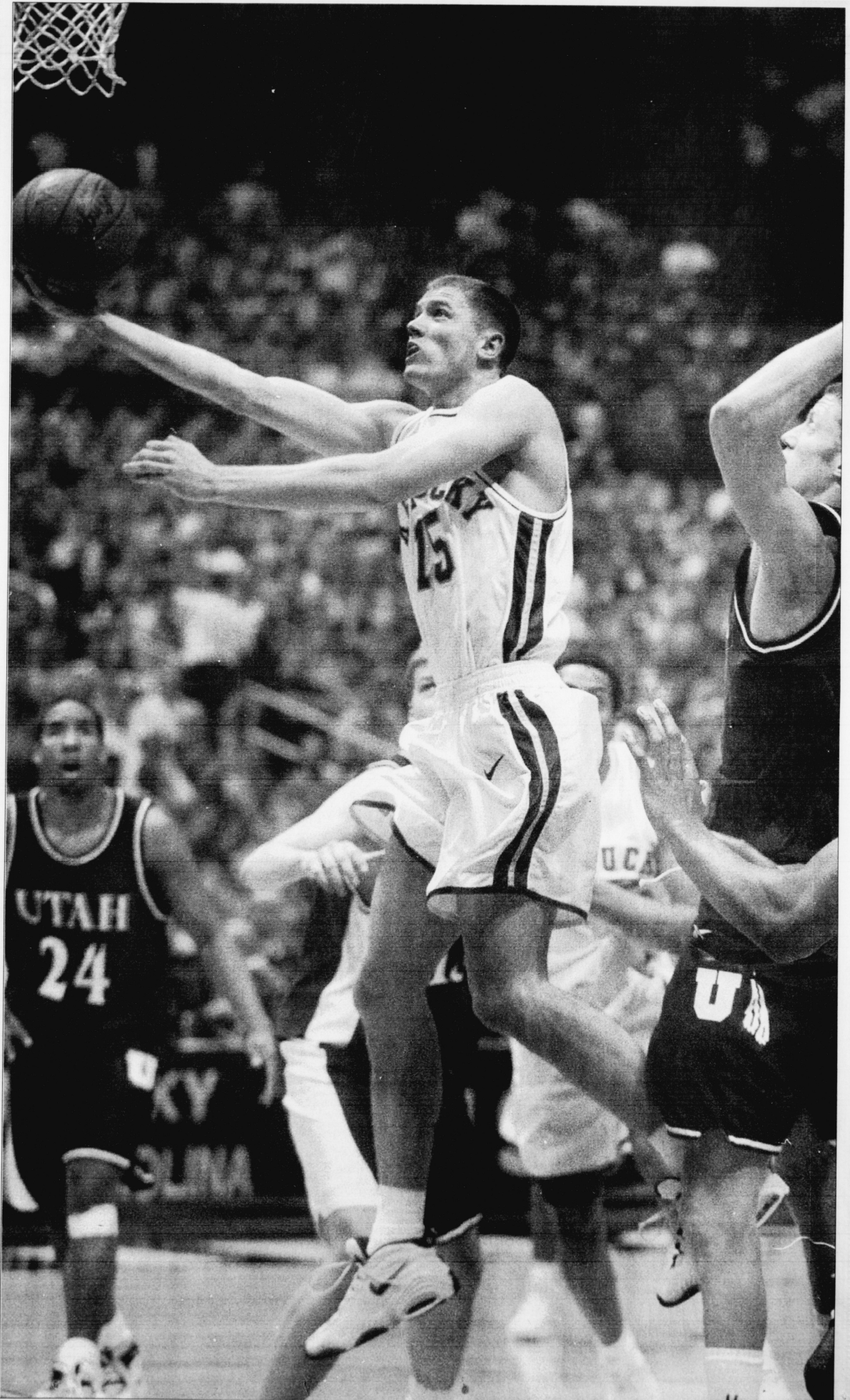
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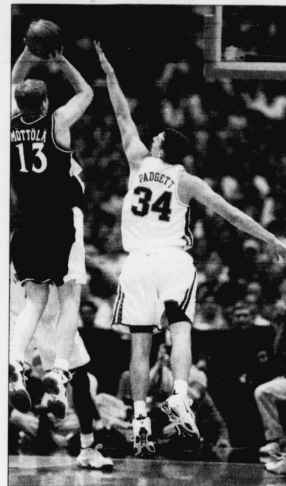
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FINAL SHOWDOWN Senior Cameron Mills looked straight into the eyes of Utah backup shooting guard David Jackson. Mills finished his UK career with three championship title games and two national titles. In last night's 78-69 win over the Utes, Mills came off the bench and landed two clutch three-pointers to help lift the Cats to victory.



DOING THE JOB Scott Padgett contested a shot by Utah forward Hanno Mottola during last night's championship game.

Players see how dream came true

By Rob Herbst
Sports Editor

SAN ANTONIO — Jamaal Magloire doesn't do infomercials. He doesn't wear a goofy genie hat or fiddle with tarot cards.

But the UK backup center knew something was in the stars.

"During the season he would run down the halls and call himself a psychic," said teammate Cameron Mills. "He kept on saying publicly we would win the national championship."

Magloire was right.

He predicted even after home losses to Florida and Ole Miss. He said it after close wins versus LSU and Alabama — not exactly dominating foes.

"I told you," Magloire said with a grin that stretched the entire locker room. "There was really never a time that I didn't think so. Maybe I should go place some money on the lottery numbers."

He added, "I never didn't think we wouldn't win the national championship. But I'm still in awe right now. It really is incredible. It's just a great feeling."

While Magloire had the extreme confidence there are those who thought championship No. 7 wouldn't come to the Commonwealth this season.

"I was guilty once this season of predicting we would win the national championship," Mills said. "But there were many times when I doubted — after each of the losses, especially after the Arizona loss. We thought, 'Was this dream ludicrous? Could we really do it?' But we decided to forget that and just go for it."

When the Cats' prediction came true Mills went face first to the floor. He was motionless while other Cats whooped and hollered.

"I didn't know what to think," said the pride of Lexington's Dunbar High School. "I just immediately wanted to praise God for what he has done for me."

"I never dreamed of winning two national championships. This is just great. I sat on the bench when we won the first one. Then I had a pretty big role last year and we got so close. But this year my role kinda of turned big and I didn't play as much. But we won it and it's just incredible."

While Mills had the fortunate honor of earning two rings, this was Scott Padgett's first. Because of academic problems, he was busy doing landscaping or telemarketing during the Cats' title run in '96.

Yesterday his 17-point effort helped the Wildcats earn the 78-69 win. In doing so Padgett was named to the All-Tournament Team but also earned the elusive ring.

"There are not too many teams that get a chance to go back to the championship game three years in a row. When we missed out on it last year, I thought I might have missed my opportunity even though at Kentucky, you always feel like you have a chance of winning the championship but you never know what could happen."

"There were times when I thought I might have missed out but during the tournament I felt we would get it the whole time."

After scoring a career-high 27 points with four three-pointers against Stanford in the semifinals on Saturday, UK senior guard Jeff Sheppard followed the performance with a 16-point night. For his two game performance in San Antonio, Sheppard was named Most Outstanding Player in the Final Four.

"I don't know if it gets any better than this," Sheppard said. "You know we have had an awesome year. It is just an awesome feeling."

At the exact same time the Wildcats celebrated their marvelous run, Utah head coach Rick Majerus was in the passenger seat of a golf cart, being driven to the press conference room.

The trademark sweater was off and a short-sleeved, sweat-stained, green-plaid shirt donned the body of a man who felt tremendous pain.

"I've got to do a better job. I didn't do a good job," Majerus said, questioning himself. "I probably should have cultivated the bench more. But I couldn't ask anything more from my kids. I know these kids will always remember being No. 2 out of the entire country, coming so far."

Deficit, what deficit?

Down 12, Cats do impossible again

By Jay G. Tate
Sports Editor

SAN ANTONIO — Add a seventh to the stash.

Though its first-half fortunes looked more like bust than blast, UK overcame a slow start and a heady Utah team to win its seventh national championship last night, 78-69.

It was another chapter of The Duke Syndrome for the Cats during the first half as UK gradually lost pace with the hot-shooting Utes and fell into a sizable deficit. Utah, which had used early efficiency to oust No. 1 seeds Arizona and North Carolina, shot 57 percent through the first half and went to the locker room with a comfortable 41-31 advantage.

The Cats, consistently ranked among the best rebounding teams in the country all season, were mauled on the boards during the first 20 minutes, losing the rebounding war 24-6.

UK had also failed to connect from three-point range during the first frame, going 0-for-6.

It was looking like doom for Big Blue. Again.

"(Utah) was just getting the rebounds over us," said UK point guard Wayne Turner, who finished the game with six points and four assists. "We knew we had to make some adjustments. Utah makes you make mistakes. They are so focused on defense."

"They were just beating us like we were 25th in the nation in rebounding — and we're one of the best."

"We were just being too tentative," backup center Jamaal Magloire said. "We knew we had some fouls and we were letting them have their way with us. That had to come to an end."

And it did.

UK's rebounding effort, spearheaded by power forward Scott Padgett, who finished with five rebounds, began to come alive in the second half. The Cats began to get second shots and as a result, Utah's point margin slowly started to dissipate.

Just six minutes into the second half, Utah's 10-point halftime lead had been whittled to just four at 48-52 after three-pointers from Heshimu Evans and Padgett.

But Utah kept scoring. Two free throws from Ute center Michael Doleac moved Utah to a 58-51 lead mid-way through the half.

Utah fans were going wild.

UK wasn't.

"We knew we were doing the things we were wanting to do," Turner said. "We were hitting shots

UTAH (69)

PLAYER	mi	fg-a	3-pt	ft-a	rb	pf	pt
Mottola	28	4-10	1-3	6-6	8	4	15
Jensen	35	5-6	1-1	3-3	2	2	14
Doleac	34	5-12	1-1	4-6	10	2	15
Miller	37	6-15	0-3	4-7	6	5	16
Hansen	32	1-6	0-2	0-0	5	2	2
Johnsen	16	3-4	1-2	0-0	4	0	7
Jackson	10	0-1	0-1	0-0	0	2	0
Caton	5	0-1	0-1	0-0	0	0	0
McTavish	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
TOTALS	200	24-55	4-14	17-22	35	18	69

KENTUCKY (78)

PLAYER	mi	fg-a	3-pt	ft-a	rb	pf	pt
Turner	27	2-5	0-1	2-4	2	0	6
Edwards	24	2-7	0-3	0-0	1	0	4
Mohammed	13	5-9	0-0	0-0	2	4	10
Magloire	22	2-3	0-0	3-3	2	4	7
Evans	23	3-4	2-2	2-2	6	1	10
Padgett	33	6-11	1-5	4-4	5	4	17
Mills	12	2-4	2-4	2-2	0	0	8
Sheppard	34	7-14	0-2	2-2	4	1	16
Smith	7	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bradley	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	1	0
TOTALS	200	29-57	22-45	15-17	23	15	78

UTAH	41	28	69
KENTUCKY	31	47	78

Field-goal percentage: UK 50.9, Utah 43.6. Free-throw percentage: UK 68.2, Utah 77.3. Technicals: None. Turnovers: UK 11 (Turner 5, Evans 3, Sheppard 2, Mohammed 1), Utah 18 (Miller 8, Johnsen 3, Mottola 3, Hansen 2, Doleac 1, Jensen 1). Blocked shots: UK 6 (Magloire 5, Mohammed 2, Evans 1), Utah 2 (Doleac 2). Steals: UK 7 (Turner 3, Sheppard 2, Edwards 1, Evans 1), Utah 8 (Doleac 3, Hansen 3, Miller 2).

Officials: Jim Burr, Donnie Gray, Mike Sanzner.

Attendance: 40,505.

Final Records: UK 35-4, Utah 30-4.

and we were contesting their shots. We stepped up our rebounding effort and we really stepped up our intensity."

That intensity led to UK's first lead of the second half just minutes later as Jeff Sheppard dunked in transition to put the Cats ahead briefly with six minutes remaining. Though Utah would move out to a four-point lead soon after, the Cats kept hitting

shots.

"When we made that run, we felt the momentum swing with us," Doleac said. "You look at the time in the game and you're up four points. But it didn't go our way. I thought we were doing pretty good."

So was Big Blue.

Mills hit a three-pointer. Sheppard connected on a drive to the basket. Magloire hit two free throws. Padgett hit two free throws. Turner hit a free throw.

Just like that, UK was up 70-65.

And Utah was down and out.

"We knew (UK) came back against Duke and they were down against Stanford," Utah forward Drew Hansen said. "We just wanted to stay aggressive. We were tentative and they were able to (gain momentum). We ran out of good shooting and fell short."

UK's strength against Utah was again in its frontcourt, which combined to score 44 of its 78 points. Though Mohammed found himself in foul trouble throughout the game, Magloire and Evans found a way to slow down Doleac, who many projected to trample the UK frontcourt.

"It was a very physical game tonight," Magloire said. "We just tried to keep a body on everybody and I think it really paid off."

"We wanted to force the post players, especially Mike Doleac, because he was really hurting us going baseline," said UK head coach Tubby Smith.

Also hurting UK during much of the game was Utah point guard Andre Miller, who used his quickness to fly by Cat defenders on several occasions. Miller eventually finished with a team-high 16 points but constant UK pressure slowed the point guard and severely limited his efficiency during the critical moments of the second half before fouling out.

"It was key for us to wear down Andre Miller," Smith said. "(Utah) really put the ball in his hands a lot. I knew if we continued to put pressure on him that we would get some turnovers."

Those turnovers — UK forced 18 in all — helped provide a fertile environment for the Cats to make their game-clinching run.

"I was getting tired of chasing (Miller) all over the court but I knew we were getting to him," Turner said. "We just kept fighting and eventually all the hard work paid off."

"We made a lot of mistakes in the first half, but we made up for it in the second half," Magloire said. "I've said all along that with hard work, we would win the national championship."

"And now you all can see that I was right."

KENTUCKY
Kernel

1998 NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

SEVENTH HEAVEN

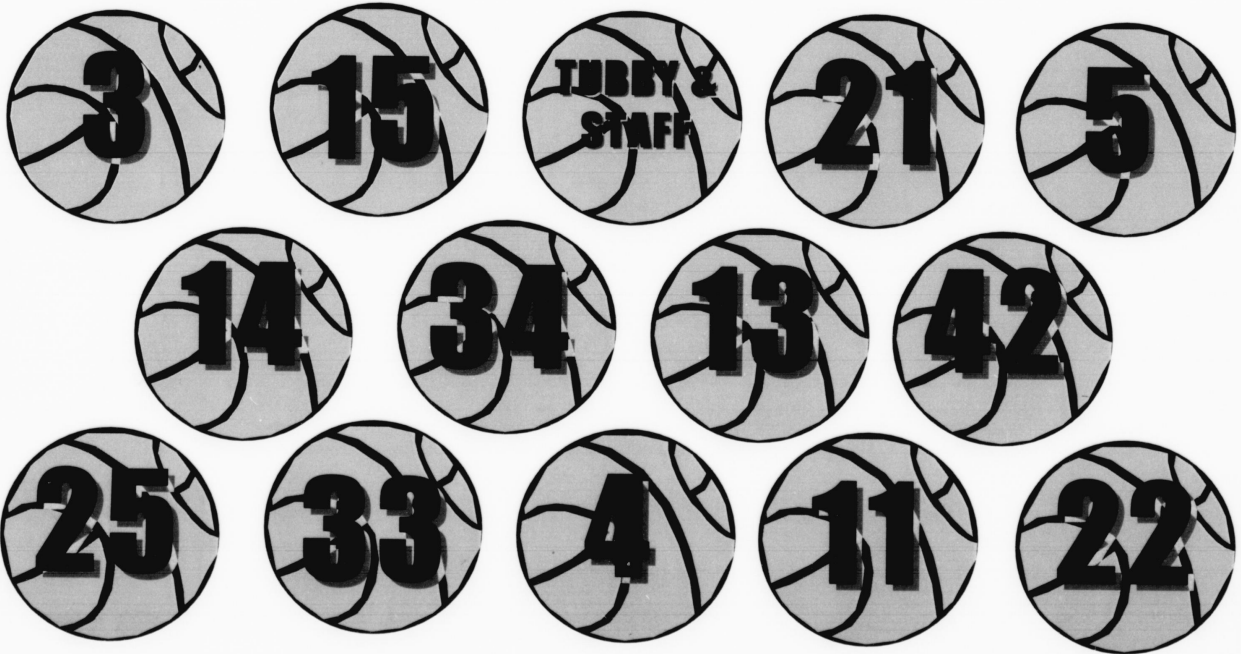


The 'experts' said it couldn't be done. But the 1997-98 Wildcats knew destiny was in their hands. Without the marquee names of the past, UK won its seventh NCAA title using its new weapons: positive attitude and teamwork.

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CONGRATULATIONS

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CATS!**

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On the road, Kernel style

Tales from the bottom to the top of college basketball's hierarchy

It all starts with a glamorous day in mid-October.

Media Day.

Time to ask the players about the new season, what they did over the summer, what aspects of each player's game has improved. Why Scott Padgett likes wrestling. If Jeff Sheppard relishes his chance to get back into the mainstream.

And so on.

It's also a time to think about how far this UK team will go.

Maybe a few games into the Southeastern Conference Tournament? An NCAA game or two?

That's what we thought, anyway. But UK lost four key players and still kept the Big Blue machine churning — at full speed with only a few brief stalls along the way.

Just a touch of turbulence.

And so on.

No one was happier about UK's winning ways throughout March than the three of us — photographer Matt Barton, my co-editor Rob Herbst and myself. We got to see half of America and the important half of the Duke-UK game in the South Region Final.

Our March Madness run started in late February, when we traveled to Auburn, Ala., to see the Cats battle the team formerly known as Auburn.

It was a great place to start, in retrospect, because Auburn is the bottom of the glam and glitter chain. Miles from any semblance of a fan base. It was here that UK walloped the Tigers, 83-58 — No. 3 of the 13-game winning streak which would land the Cats' their seventh national championship.

Auburn was also the place where I first started to understand the role of Jamaal Magloire. He is not a scorer. He is not a leader.

But he is the spirit.

Prior to the game, Magloire is along the baseline taunting the Cliff Dwellers — the official name of AU's student section — which is thoughtfully situated behind both backboards.

Again, a far cry from the glam and glitter chain.

So here's Magloire using UK's pre-game warm-ups to unload his most powerful dunks.

Jeff Sheppard lays it in.

Steve Masiello lays it in.

Magloire unloads a thunderous two handed jam.

It's strikingly out of place.

He points his finger at the students and screams. They laugh. He continues taunting. He does



MATT BARTON Kernel staff

ACE IN THE HOLE *Ace Hunt, USC's unofficial mascot, is the life — and death — of March Madness.*

his Hulk Hogan imitation and asks to hear them scream louder.

Meanwhile, Myron Anthony looks over at press row and starts laughing hysterically.

All this for Auburn?

No, that's just what Magloire does. He riles people up. Remember the leglock-backbreaker he used on Steve Wojciechowski in the Duke game? Magloire riles people up. And in a lot of cases, it riles his team up.

Misunderstood genius.

Our next stop was in Columbus, Ga., to watch the SEC Women's Tournament. We were there to watch UK play Mississippi State — a team the Cats had beaten just weeks before.

It was a short stay.

Next was South Carolina, where we watched the Cats dismantle the Gamecocks in their own building.

Usual stuff. USC forgot about Heshimu Evans. So he dunked on them. Repeatedly.

Best part of the trip was seeing a rather un-glorious student — who turned out to be the assistant sports editor of the USC student paper — running around the floor with no discernible plan or affect during timeouts with a hollowed-out volleyball on his head.

That's "Ace." Says so right on the volleyball. In glitter: "ACE."

His name is Ace Hunt. Really.

So we're on to the Men's SEC Tournament — held in Atlanta. UK nails Alabama by 11 points. Then Arkansas by 25. Then South Carolina by 30 to win the tourna-

ment title.

It was a sign.

Ace told us that he'd like to meet up with us later in the NCAA Tournament — provided, of course, that UK could make it that far.

USC lost in the first round to Richmond. Goodbye, Ace.

We headed back to Atlanta for UK's first-round games — which turned out to be laughs. But UK's first-round opponent, South Carolina State, was a pleasure to watch. The team from Orangeburg, S.C., had never been on an airplane. The Bulldogs took buses everywhere they went.

Even to Delaware State. Almost 800 miles.

The NAAs were different. They helped SCSU fly to Atlanta.

"The NCAA took care of us," point guard Roderick "Moo Moo" Blakney said.

Refreshing.

The rest was a blur. We flew to St. Petersburg to see UK play UCLA. Then the Cats played Duke.

I'll come out and say it. I didn't think my school had a chance.

But they did. The scene was amazing.

The press box was about 50 feet from the Duke student section. The Dookies used to be loud. But as William Avery's last-second heave glanced harmlessly off the backboard, the Dookies were without words. They stared at the court.

In unison.

Beautiful.

The Final Four was great and everyone knows what happened. After North Carolina fell to Utah, the No. 1-seed killing machine, things looked good for the Cats.

And things ended well.

Turns out Magloire had been calling it for weeks. After the USC game, Jamaal said UK would win it all. I chuckled. He didn't.

He was the one chuckling in San Antonio, sitting comfortably atop the glam-and-glitter chain — hundreds of miles and 10 wins from Auburn.

What follows is a collection of stories about the 1997-98 season. They tell the story of a team that searched for its identity for much of the season. But when that discovery finally came to fruition and the team learned to win without star power, the season took a major turn for the better.

And it concluded in a happy resting place.

Seventh heaven.

— Jay G. Tate

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UK **IU**
75 **72**

Dec. 6, 1997 • Indianapolis

Just one week after a grueling 10,000-mile road trip which led UK across the country, UK used its depth — and a little luck — to upend Indiana.

RCA Dome tough again

By Rob Herbst
Sports Editor

INDIANAPOLIS — For the Wildcats the RCA Dome has been a house of horrors.

The 1997 installment of UK's season began and ended with overtime losses at the Dome, which included a loss to Arizona in the national championship game.

But UK left it up to a Big Ten team to help it seize success in Indianapolis. UK won its 10th straight game over a Big Ten team with a 75-72 squeaker over arch-rival Indiana.

"It's just so good to beat Indiana," UK senior Jeff Sheppard said. "This game is just so fun to play in with the sea of red and blue and I'm sure it's so fun to watch."

Like most UK-IU battles, the game climaxed in the final minute. In the last nine games, eight of have been decided by no more than seven points.

The only exception was UK's 99-65 rout of the Hoosiers last year in Louisville.

"This year we had some runs early and then Indiana had some runs and that's usually how the game goes," Sheppard said. "If you look at all the games in the past, they've all been close games except for last year's. That was a freak show there. That doesn't happen much when UK and Indiana play."

The game wouldn't have been a proverbial nail-biter had UK's offense late in the game not been as cold as the weather outside the Dome.

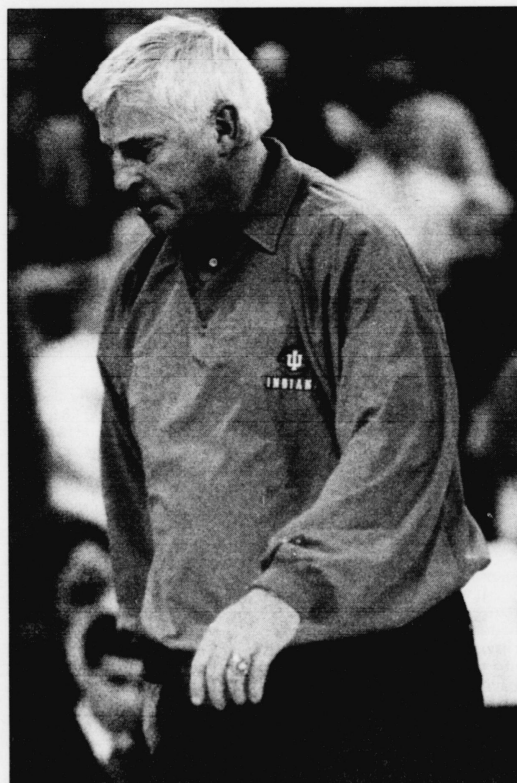
One whopping point in the final 3:56 for the Cats on a Wayne Turner free-throw. What was a fairly comfortable seven-point lead for UK went to a near disastrous choke.

But it wasn't UK who did the choking, rather it was a monumental mishap by the Hoosiers.

Down by two with the ball in the final seconds, the Hoosiers' Luke Recker found teammate William Gladness open in the paint for a seemingly easy dunk or lay-up.

Easy it wasn't though, as Gladness lost the ball on his way up and the Cats still held onto a two-point lead.

"I got in his face a little but I didn't touch the ball," said UK



THE GENERAL Indiana head coach Bobby Knight continued his recent struggles against UK. Knight is now 2-5 in the 1990s against the Wildcats.

center Nazr Mohammed. "I just tried to get in there and contest (the shot)."

After Turner split a pair of free throws with six seconds remaining, Indiana called a timeout to set up for a final shot.

The Hoosiers' A.J. Guyton got off a running three-point attempt but the shot hit the front of the rim and the Cats escaped with the victory.

"We really looked for Guyton to get that shot at the end and he really got a good look," Turner said. "I was just glad it didn't go in because he was my man."

Not only was the win redemption for the Cats in Indianapolis, it was redemption for UK's Nazr Mohammed. The junior center lifted the Cats with a spirited 8-of-11 effort from the field for 21 points and 12 rebounds in the win.

Mohammed also found redemption from last year's championship game. Although he scored 12 points against Arizona last year, an 0-for-6 performance from the free throw line in the championship game was still lingering. Against Indiana, Mohammed went 5-for-8.

"I had a feeling it was my type of day," Mohammed said.

UK
91

C
70

Jan. 13, 1998 • Lexington

Last season, South Carolina swept the Cats for the first time ever. But bad memories fueled UK for an unsightly blast of redemption this time around.

'Buzz saw' rips Carolina

By Jay G. Tate
Sports Editor

After whipping South Carolina 91-70 Jan. 13, UK showed the nation that the pain from UK's home loss to South Carolina on Senior Day last season had not gone away.

That pain had instead been transferred to the Gamecocks, who received a full-court, full-game assault on the same court which gave USC nationwide notoriety last season.

"I thought we competed pretty hard here," USC head coach Eddie Fogler said. "We just got hit by a buzz saw."

That saw took the form of an offensive bonanza by the Cats, who shot 50 percent for the game, including a 12-of-22 performance from beyond the three-point line. In one of his best games of the season, forward Allen Edwards finished with a season-high 12 assists and nine points to lead the UK win.

"I was lucky," a humble Edwards said afterward. "Guys were just hitting shots tonight. My back was bothering me tonight, so I had the mindset to look for open guys and to not shoot."

"(The players) wanted to win this game pretty bad," Smith said. "Having lost to South Carolina twice last year, I could see that they were focused and ready to play."

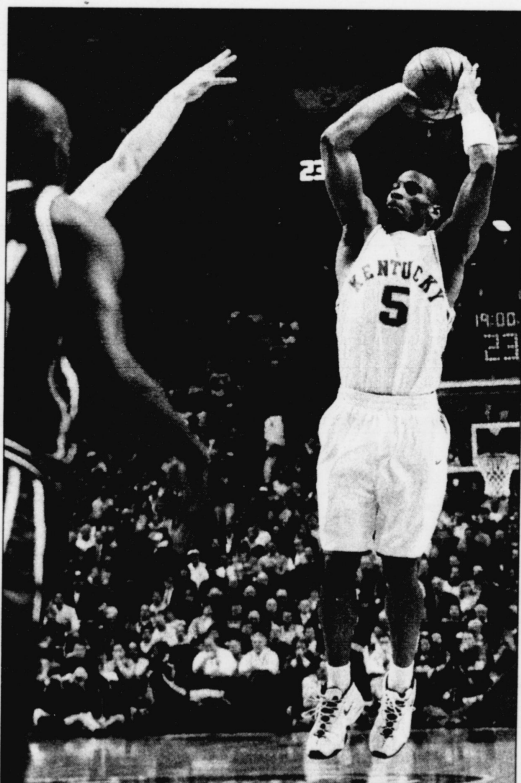
UK opened an early 17-5 lead on a trio of three-pointers from Allen Edwards, Wayne Turner and Jeff Sheppard. But after a Sheppard technical foul at the 15:52 mark, South Carolina began to formulate an answer.

USC forward Herbert Lee Davis scored on back-to-back possessions to pull the Gamecocks within one at 17-16. For nearly two-and-a-half minutes, the Cats went silent while USC continued to dump in a flurry of baskets midway through the first half.

After a seemingly impossible fall-away jumper by BJ McKie to narrowly beat the shot clock, the Cats decided to get serious.

In just five minutes, UK scored 13 points. USC scored none.

A three-pointer by reserve guard Saul Smith put the Cats' half-time lead at 13 points, 43-30.



JAMES CRISP/Kenel staff

FADING AWAY UK guard Wayne Turner put up a shot over South Carolina's Melvin Watson (left). Turner said losses last year motivated the Cats.

"We came into the game and everyone wanted to beat them by a lot of points," Turner said.

UK's half-court defense, which provided the Cats relief during their early-season shooting slump, was in form against the Gamecocks. USC shot 40 percent for the game and limited guard Melvin Watson to 12 points.

But it was Big Blue's three-point defense that handled the Gamecocks the best. South Carolina shot just 5-of-20 from beyond the arc.

Though South Carolina would continue to whittle at the UK lead

throughout the second half, the Cats continued to find ways to keep its offensive fortunes alive. Mid-way through the second half, the Gamecocks pulled to within 14 points at 60-46.

But Sheppard's two three-pointers near the eight-minute mark squelched any thoughts of a Senior Day relapse.

Fogler credited UK's defense and the Rupp Arena environment as major factors in his team's follies.

"As hard as I thought it was to win in Rupp last year, it's harder," Fogler said. "The team, the fans, the coaches are all amazing."



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UK



64

73

Feb. 14, 1998 • Lexington

Ole Miss earned its stripes last season after beating UK in Oxford, Miss. People began to respect the Rebels after beating the conference's best. But few people, including some of the Rebels themselves, thought Ole Miss could win in Rupp Arena.

Cats rack up third home loss to UM

By Rob Herbst
Sports Editor

To truly understand the significance of UK's 73-64 loss to Ole Miss on Feb. 14, one needs a quick history lesson.

Lesson No. 1: Excluding the 1988-89 season under Eddie Sutton, a season Wildcat fans like to put out of their mind, UK hadn't lost three regular-season home games since the 1978-79 season.

Until this year. "I asked (my players) what the problem was at home," said UK head coach Tubby Smith. "None of them seemed to have an

answer. I don't know what it is."

Lesson No. 2: Ole Miss had not won in Lexington since 1927.

That was 71 years ago. Legendary UK basketball equipment manager Bill "Mr. Wildcat" Keightley was just a two-month old baby the last time the Rebels beat the Wildcats in Lexington.

"They're jumping in the streets of Oxford, Miss., right now," said Ole Miss head coach Rob Evans after the Rebels' nine-point win.

"They're excited about this basketball team. The excitement of basketball at Ole Miss is unbelievable right now. It's great for

me to see."

UK put together both a solid offensive and defensive effort in the first half of this year's game.

The Wildcats' defense held Ole Miss to only five assists coupled with 10 turnovers.

Ole Miss also shot a paltry 29 percent from the field, partially thanks to a spirited Wildcat defense.

Offensively the Wildcats hit a respectable 48 percent and solid ball movement earned the Cats 12 assists.

UK rode the back of junior center Nazr Mohammed, who led the Cats' attack by hitting 6-of-10 from the field for 12 first-half points.

A complete offensive and defensive effort by UK gave the Cats a seemingly comfortable 34-23 lead at halftime.

But in the second half, UK's spirited effort became history and unanswered questions as to why UK became the flat-Cats became popular.

"We started that second half so flat and I couldn't really tell you why," Smith said.

That seemingly comfortable 11-point halftime lead became history only five minutes into the second half when Ole Miss went on a 16-4 run to take the lead.

Ole Miss went to All-Southeastern Conference

power forward Ansu Sesay to surge ahead of the Wildcats. Sesay, who scored only two first-half points on an 0-for-5 shooting, finished the game with 16 points by hitting 5-of-6 second-half shots.

While Sesay made an appearance in the second half, Mohammed disappeared.

After making noise in the first half with his 12 points, Mohammed didn't score in the second frame.

"Nazr didn't get the ball in the second half and that's our fault as guards," said guard Jeff Sheppard. "We should have gotten the ball to Nazr somehow."

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78



86

Feb. 1, 1998 • Lexington

For much of the season, Florida point guard Jason Williams was among league leaders in both scoring and assists and had emerged as one of the conference's best players. He made the Gators contenders. And he gave the Gators credibility. Though Williams would be dismissed from the team just a week after the win, Florida rode his coattails for its first victory in Rupp since 1989.

Gators use bombing attack on Cats

By Jay G. Tate
Sports Editor

Three-point defense. Against Louisville in December, it became The Problem Which Plagues This UK Team.

The Cardinals landed 12 treys to upend an otherwise sturdy UK team and sparked a statewide debate concerning the relative strength of this year's Big Blue squad.

Though the three-point problem seemed to have gone into remission after the U of L loss, it re-emerged Feb. 1 as Florida — the NCAA's best three-point shooting team — took UK for a perimeter-laden ride, 86-78.

"We knew we were going to have to do a better job defending the three-point shot today and it seemed like they had an answer for every time we made a run," UK head coach Tubby Smith said.

Typical UK scoring runs were smaller and less consistent than the runs authored by the Gators, who shot 12-of-21 from three-point range. Though only boosting Florida a few points at a time, UF runs came more often.

And they hurt a lot more. A game-opening dunk from center Nazr Mohammed was followed by Florida's biggest run of the game — a 7-0 effort highlighted by a nifty reverse lay-up by 5-foot-11 shooting

guard Eddie Shannon in transition.

That put the Gators up 9-3. After more three-point euphoria from Williams, freshman forward Brent Wright and Greg Stolt, the Gators found themselves up by 13 points mid-way through the first half.

And they found UK's inside game on the bench. In an effort to stunt Florida's quickness, Smith elected to go with a smaller line-up and left Mohammed and low-post teammate Jamaal Magloire off the court.

"I wanted quickness to contest (Florida's) shots," Smith said. "We tried to go small and try to match-up because I thought they

were really hurting us with their perimeter game. It's tough for Naz and Jamaal to guard guys on the perimeter."

"It was good seeing (Mohammed and Magloire) over there on the bench," Florida's Kenyan Weaks quipped.

The second half was much like the first.

UK hit shots. Florida hit a few more. Florida kept rebounding. UK didn't.

But with seven minutes remaining, UK had cut the Florida lead to seven behind guard Cameron Mills' fifth three-pointer. Though Mills would conclude the night with a career-high 31 points, Florida kept answering.

"Every time Kentucky made a run at our lead, our guys were able to withstand it and answer the bell," Florida Coach Billy Donovan said.

And the final bell was answered when Florida went on a 6-0 run to extend its lead to 75-62.

That, coupled with a 40-30 win in the rebounding game, was all Florida needed to earn its first victory in Rupp Arena since 1989.

And in the end, Padgett said, UK couldn't keep up.

"They wanted it more," he said. "We're probably going to sit down with ourselves and say, 'We've got to come out and put it all on the line every night or this will happen again.'"

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UK **G**
85 **74**

Feb. 22, 1998 • Lexington

It was billed as Smith Bowl II. UK head coach Tubby Smith was again facing his old school and oldest son when the Cats hosted Georgia late in the conference season. But the emotion of the Smith family "rivalry" was overshadowed by three UK seniors who played their final game in Rupp Arena the same day. Tears rolled both on the court and in the stands.

Win over Dawgs gives UK seniors a fond farewell

By Jay G. Tate
Sports Editor

For UK seniors Cameron Mills, Jeff Sheppard and Allen Edwards, their final home game concluded much the same as their first.

Sheppard scored his first Rupp Arena point in a 115-77 runaway win over Tennessee Tech in 1993. Mills and Edwards both scored their first baskets in a 124-50 runaway over Tennessee-Martin in 1994.

Those points seemed all but forgotten Feb. 22, however, as the seniors combined for 29 points to help seal an 85-74 runaway win over Georgia on Senior Day.

Sure, it was Georgia, UK head coach Tubby Smith's former team.

Sure, it was a win.

But for the three seniors, it was the end of the Rupp Arena road.

"Before the game, we were talking about who would be the first to break down," Mills said. "I'm proud to say that I was the only one that did cry that I know of. It was an emotional game."

Though Mills may have been the only UK player to break down, the Cats were the first team to break down.

Throughout the first half, Georgia thoughtfully used its quickness to take the Cats to task in a one-on-one brand of offense. On the strength of efficient outside shooting from guard G.G. Smith (3-of-5) and forward Jumaine Jones (4-of-6), the Bulldogs mounted an eight-point lead midway through the half.

The Cats were frustrated. "It's hard to get over to help when they're driving and penetrating," UK forward Scott Padgett said. "They had some open looks and the shots

were falling."

Falling to the tune of 54 percent from the field. Falling to the tune of 5-for-10 from three-point range. Falling to the tune of a 43-36 UGA half-time lead.

But much as they did all season, the Cats adjusted.

"We weren't able to stop them one-on-one or man-to-man," Smith said. "We went to our zone to try to contain dribble-penetration to make them shoot over us and thinking that we could gain some momentum."

And momentum he got.

Georgia's halftime lead was erased less than three minutes into the second half behind a three-pointer from Mills, a lay-in from center Nazr Mohammed and a nifty drive-and-foul from Sheppard.

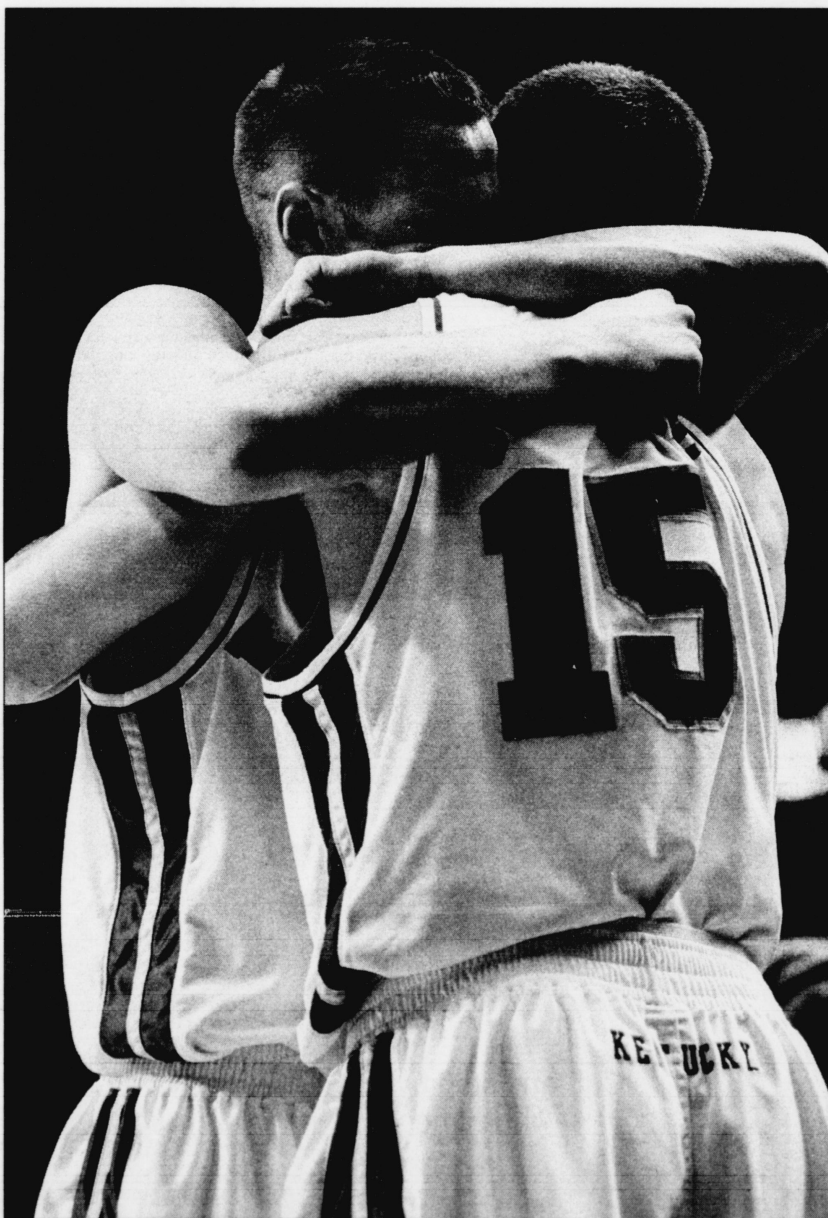
What resulted was a quick UK lead and a confused group of Bulldogs.

"We made some adjustments to go to the zone in the second half and I thought that gave them some problems," Smith said.

The hot shooting which fueled the Bulldogs early made a quick exit once the Cats switched into the zone defense. Georgia enjoyed first-half success in the paint — notching seven baskets. But a tighter second-half UK defense allowed only two UGA field goals inside and left the Bulldogs hoping for outside efficiency to save their cause.

It didn't work. Georgia shot 4-of-18 from three-point range in the second half.

"We didn't shoot well and we couldn't get the ball inside to get to the free-throw line," Georgia head coach Ron Jirsa said. "But they are a bigger team with a good zone (defense). They did a good job of denying the ball to us."



THE TEARY GOODBYE Seniors Cameron Mills (left) and Jeff Sheppard shared a short embrace near the conclusion of UK's win over Georgia on Senior Day. Mills joked after the game that he was proud to have been the first Wildcat to cry on this Senior Day.

File photo

UK
86

D
84

March 22, 1998 • St. Petersburg, Fla.

Everyone clad in blue on March 28, 1992 remembers. Duke star Christian Laettner landed a miracle turnaround jumper at the buzzer to deny UK its first trip to the Final Four in years. Six seasons later, Duke and UK met again for a trip to the Final Four. Up 17 points in the second half, the Blue Devils thought they had it won. UK had other ideas.

After years of pain, Cats return favor against Blue Devils

By Jay G. Tate
Sports Editor

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — What is it about Duke and UK?

Six years ago former Duke star Christian Laettner used an elementary turn-and-shoot to steal a win from a deserving UK team and in turn broke the hearts of many in the Bluegrass.

But on March 22 in an all-or-nothing rematch with a trip to the Final Four in the balance, UK seized control of both a sputtering Duke team and the evils of March 28, 1992, by edging the No. 1-seeded Blue Devils, 86-84.

Down 71-54 with less than 10 minutes to go, Big Blue's hopes for another national championship seemed all but extinguished. The Blue Devils were on fire, scoring on eight of their past 11 possessions. The Cats, in turn, had scored on just four of their last 14 possessions.

The situation looked dim for UK.

"For a while there, it seemed like it was just three after three after three," UK guard Jeff Sheppard said of Duke's early second-half surge.

"Duke kept hitting shots, but we kept digging and digging and digging," forward Allen Edwards said. "It looked bad, but we kept our heads up and kept working."

The work paid off. Though Duke continued to score, the Cats' offense started to move. Point guard Wayne Turner hit a free throw after being fouled on a drive through the lane. Then Sheppard scored on a drive. Forward Heshimu Evans hit a three-pointer. Then Scott Padgett hit from outside. Then Turner was fouled as he hit another drive down the lane.

UK quickly whittled Duke's once-impermeable 17-point lead

to just eight in less than four minutes.

"It looked pretty tough before we started hitting those shots," said backup center Jamaal Magloire, who maintained throughout the postseason that UK would eventually win the national championship. "But there was no doubt in my mind that we would not lose again this year."

The time for reckoning came with 2:12 remaining when Lexington native Cameron Mills grabbed a tipped rebound from Evans and hit a three-pointer to give UK its first lead at 80-79.

"Everything was just moving in slow motion at that point," Mills said. "I wished it and I pumped my fist and praised God. All I could say was 'thanks.'"

It wasn't over.

Duke power forward Roshown McLeod hit two free throws to move the Blue Devils ahead by one point. After Padgett hit a free throw to even the score, another long rebound found its way to the UK perimeter.

Padgett for three.

Boom.

"Tough shot," Evans explained afterward. "They really had no answer for that."

After one free throw each from Turner and Edwards and a three-pointer from Duke's McLeod, UK was up 86-84 with 4.5 seconds remaining.

Duke inbounded the ball to freshman guard William Avery, who heaved a shot from just inside half-court.

It deflected off the backboard.

UK won the South Region and a chance for its seventh NCAA title the next weekend in San Antonio.

"I don't have the vocabulary to describe it," Mills said. "That's why I have to get someone else to write my book for me. There just aren't words to describe how I feel."

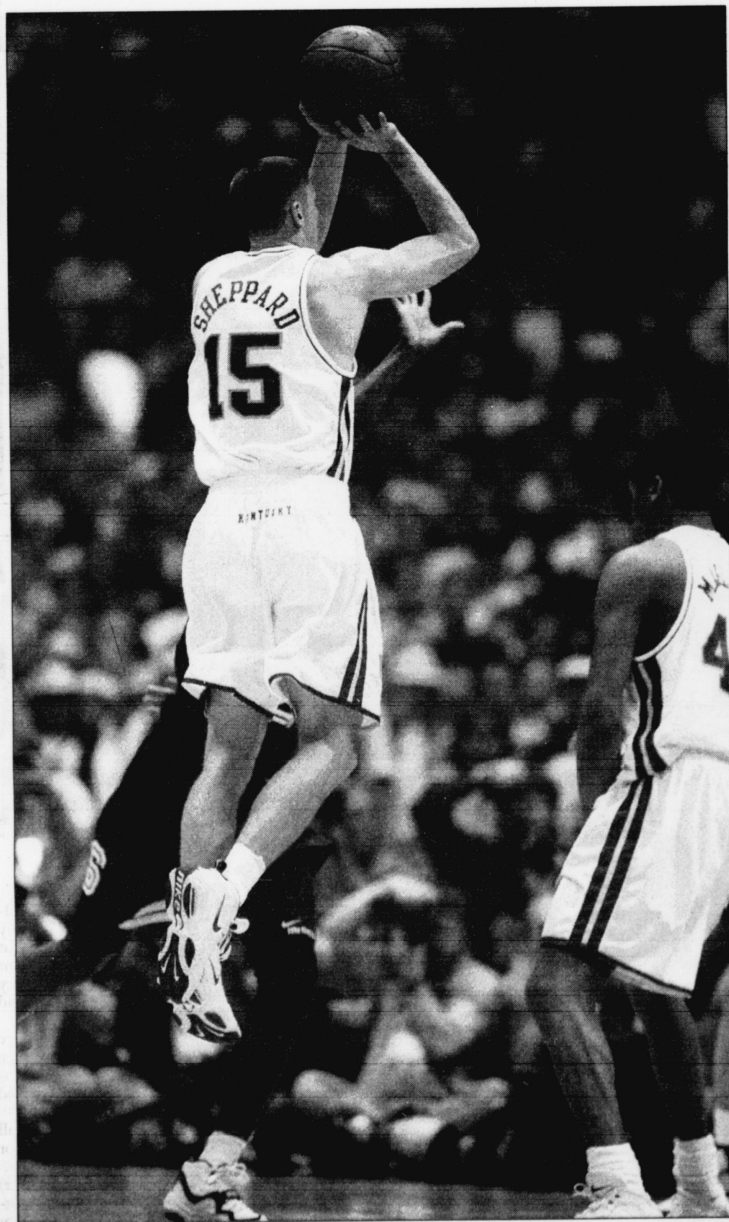


MATT BARTON/Kennel staff

THE MVP Wayne Turner scored 16 points and dished eight assists against Duke to help UK pull off the miracle upset. He was awarded with South Region MVP honors for his efforts — which included a four-game 25-6 assist-to-turnover ratio.

UK
86**S**
85**March 28, 1998 • San Antonio**

After edging Duke with a back-from-the-dead performance, UK faced Stanford and its talented point guard, Arthur Lee, in the national semifinals. Though many took the West Coast school lightly by citing home losses to Arizona State and Washington, Stanford gave the Cats one of the season's biggest scares.



File photo

THE SAVIOR Though several Wildcats helped UK get out of its troubles against Stanford, senior Jeff Sheppard rose above the rest. His three three-pointers in the second half helped UK make up its second-half deficit.

Cats need overtime, second revival to top tough Cardinal team

By Rob Herbst
Sports Editor

SAN ANTONIO — When one pops a pimple, sometimes it just comes right back. For the Wildcats on March 28, that pimple was Stanford. But luckily for UK that pimple eventually went away as the Wildcats eeked out an 86-85 overtime victory in the semifinals of the NCAA Tournament.

"I told the team, you never talk about a quick win but you've got to last," said UK head coach Tubby Smith. "I think this team has been very resilient all year long and been able to preserve and been able to overcome a lot of things."

At the outset of the game Stanford didn't look like a simple face blemish but rather a life-threatening disease. The Wildcats never led in the first half and found themselves down by double-digits only five minutes in. "We weren't shooting well," said center Jamaal Magloire. "But at the same time we weren't executing our offense well."

After again briefly falling down by double-digits in the second half, the Wildcats found a cure for the disease. The Cats used a 16-4 run and took its first lead of the game when Scott Padgett hit two free throws at the 10-minute mark.

Coming out of a timeout after Stanford's three-point play, Sheppard nailed a three-pointer off a curl screen for a one-point advantage. Sheppard nailed virtually the same shot with 70 seconds remaining to give UK a four-point lead.

"They were called plays," Smith said. "We see a guy with a hot hand and Jeff had a hot hand. The play was designed to look inside right away and hit him coming off with another down screen with one of the post players."

The Cats earned a three-point lead with five minutes remaining when Stanford became that annoying pimple.

Stanford's Arthur Lee, who led the Cardinal with 26 points, hit a three from the left angle with 23 seconds

left to tie the game.

"Everytime we'd get up by three, they'd come down and hit a big shot and make it real close," said UK forward Allen Edwards.

UK had an opportunity for a game-winning shot. Instead of finding Sheppard's hot hand, a not-so-hot Turner took the shot.

"That's one of my patented shots right there," said Turner who finished with a 2-of-8 shooting performance for eight points. "Going to the baseline, the one-two step and bank it in off the backboard. But it rolled around right out. That's what it was doing all night."

The Wildcats regained form in overtime. UK scored the first five points in overtime over a two-minute span and seemed in control.

The pimple came back.

Down by four with two minutes remaining, Turner fouled Lee on a three-point attempt and Lee proceeded to hit all three free throws.

"Arthur (Lee) was making some huge plays," Stanford's Mark Madsen said. "He came out at the beginning of the game making huge plays and he was making huge plays for us down the stretch as well."

Then controversy.

With 90 seconds left and UK up one with possession, the Cats' Scott Padgett drove the paint and went up for a dunk, contested by Madsen. Padgett bricked the dunk off the rim and out of bounds. But the Cats retained possession because officials declared Madsen grazed the ball off the blown dunk.

Again the pimple didn't go away.

Stanford's Ryan Mendez hit a three to cut the lead to one. Three UK free throws later, Stanford's Peter Sauer nailed a three with nine seconds remaining to cut the lead to a mere point again.

Stanford had zero timeouts and could only settle for a full-court heave after Turner's second free throw missed. The pimple finally went away.

"It definitely hurts," Lee said.

"Like I told the coach when the buzzer sounded, I couldn't believe that we lost."

UK
78

U
69

March 30, 1998 • San Antonio

Utah came into the NCAA finals having whipped two college basketball giants in Arizona and North Carolina. But that was Arizona and North Carolina. The Utes tried a similar strategy against the Cats — thoughtful, precise and controlled basketball. But the Utes soon learned that their final opponent wouldn't fold. Wouldn't quit. And wouldn't lose.

Utah finds NCAA road bottlenecked by UK again

By Jay G. Tate
Sports Editor

SAN ANTONIO — Add a seventh to the stash.

Though its first-half fortunes looked more like bust than blast, UK overcame a slow start and a heady Utah team to win its seventh national championship March 30, 78-69.

It was another chapter of The Duke Syndrome for the Cats during the first half as UK gradually lost pace with the hot-shooting Utes and fell into a sizable deficit. Utah, which had used early efficiency to oust No. 1 seeds Arizona and North Carolina, shot 57 percent through the first half and went to the locker room with a comfortable 41-31 advantage.

The Cats, consistently ranked among the best rebounding teams in the country all season, were mauled on the boards during the first 20 minutes, losing the rebounding war 24-6.

UK had also failed to connect from three-point range during the first frame, going 0-for-6.

It was looking like doom for Big Blue. Again.

"(Utah) was just getting the rebounds over us," said UK point guard Wayne Turner, who finished the game with six points and four assists. "We knew we had to make some adjustments.

"We knew we had some fouls and we were letting them have their way with us," said backup center Jamaal Magloire. "That had to come to an end."

And it did.

Just six minutes into the second half, Utah's 10-point halftime lead had been chopped down to just four at 52-48 after three-pointers from Heshimu Evans and Scott Padgett.

But Utah kept scoring. Two free throws from Ute center Michael Doleac moved Utah to a 58-51 lead mid-way through the half.

Utah fans were going wild.

UK wasn't.

"We knew we were doing the things we were wanting to do," Turner said. "We stepped up our rebounding effort and we really stepped up our intensity."



File photo

THE DEFENSE Though the Utes jumped ahead of the Wildcats in the first half, UK's full- and half-court pressure eventually forced Utah into difficult substitution patterns. Utah's David Jackson (right), a second-string guard, was forced into action after the Ute starters were physically drained.

That intensity led to UK's first lead of the second half just minutes later as Jeff Sheppard dunked in transition to put the Cats ahead briefly with six minutes remaining.

Though Utah would move out to a four-point lead soon after, the Cats kept hitting shots.

"When we made that run, we felt the momentum swing with us," Doleac said. "You look at the time in the game and you're up four points. But it didn't go our way. I thought we were doing pretty good."

So was Big Blue.

Cameron Mills hit a three-pointer. Sheppard connected on a drive to the basket. Magloire hit two free throws. Padgett hit two free throws. Turner hit a free throw. Just like that, UK was up 70-65.

And Utah was down and out.

"We knew (UK) came back against Duke and they were down against Stanford," Utah forward Drew Hansen said. "We just wanted to stay aggressive. We were tentative and they were able to (gain momentum). We ran out of good shooting and fell short."

UK's strength against Utah was again in its frontcourt, which combined to score 44 of its 78 points. Though Mohammed found himself in foul trouble throughout the game, Magloire and Evans found a way to slow down Doleac, who many projected to trample the UK frontcourt.

"We wanted to force the post players, especially Mike Doleac, because he was really hurting us going baseline," said UK head coach Tubby Smith.

Also hurting UK during much of the game was Utah point guard Andre Miller,

who used his quickness to fly by Cat defenders on several occasions. Miller eventually finished with a team-high 16 points but constant UK pressure slowed the point guard and severely limited his efficiency during the critical moments of the second half before fouling out.

"It was key for us to wear down Andre Miller," Smith said. "(Utah) really put the ball in his hands a lot. I knew if we continued to put pressure on him that we would get some turnovers."

Those turnovers — UK forced 18 in all — helped provide a fertile environment for the Cats to make their game-clinching run.

"I was getting tired of chasing (Miller) all over the court but I knew we were getting to him," Turner said. "We just kept fighting and eventually all the hard work paid off."

Take a ride with the Cats on their journey to Seventh Heaven

By Eric Mosalpo
Sports Columnist

Flawed teams are the unforgettable ones.

Sans a marquee player, the 1997-98 Kentucky Wildcats rarely flirted with perfection but learned the delicate art of masking vulnerabilities. They learned how to maintain poise at the edge of the abyss.

They learned to transcend.

Thus, an improbable journey ended at the highest peak as the Comeback Cats climbed the stairway to hoops heaven. From this dizzying perch, remember the pothole-laced and gold-trimmed road to glory.

1

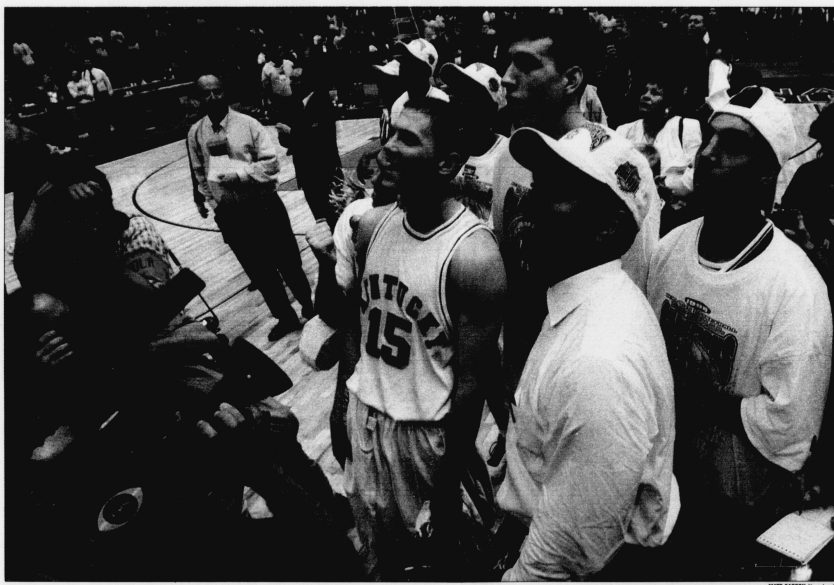
Comeback for the ages ... the one that made Tropiana Field in St. Petersburg quiver. Remember how mighty Duke, which would lose a statewide popularity runoff with Saddam Hussein, led 71-54 with nine and a half minutes to play in the South Region Final.

Then, remember how UK came back with the fury of a scorned lover. Remember the bewildered expression of Blue Devil point guard Steve Wojcickowski as Wayne Turner continually blazed past him to animate the court with 10 points and three assists in the closing 32-13 Wildcat tsunami. Remember the grit that gleamed in Kentucky's eye.

Remember how Heshimu Evans, the human adrenaline tablet, jumpstarted the rally with a three-pointer. Remember Scott Padgett's three that whittled the deficit to 71-60 and the Allen Edwards three that made it 72-66.

And savor forever the memory of the Cameron Mills three that finally gave UK the lead (80-79) and the Padgett three that punctuated this fairy tale.

Remember the image of Mills weeping face-down on Tropiana Field seconds later as six years worth of Christian Laettner-induced vengeance was suddenly satiated into the rush of the sweetest revenge.



SEVENTH HEAVEN Coach Tabby Smith, Jeff Sheppard, Scott Padgett, Sand Smith, Wayne Turner, Steve Masiello and a host of others watched the championship replays after the Cats' victory over Utah March 30 in San Antonio.

2

Giddy days at the Georgia Dome ...

in early March, when the UK locomotive derailed Southeastern Conference brethren Arkansas and South Carolina by a combined 53 points. Remember how the Cats fired up the barbecue early, springing to a preposterous 41-13 lead on the Hogs. Remember the sight of Arkansas coach Nolan Richardson, fashion police fugitive, looking as if he had just landed on Neptune.

Recall the following day, when South Carolina — gluttonous with fatigue — fell to UK for the third time after sweeping the Cats the year before. In the team's two regular season games, the Cats' quicksand of a 1-2-2 attacking zone held the Gamecocks

to 41 percent shooting the first game — 38 percent the next.

Wildcat Coach Tabby Smith, never one to cater to expectation, used an old-fashioned man-to-man defense in the SEC title game to limit the Cocks to 36 percent shooting.

Amidst the celebration of UK's sixth conference tourney title in seven years, Jamaal Magloire guaranteed a national championship and team confidence began to ooze.

"The confidence of this team is as high — maybe even higher — than last year's team heading into the NCAA's," team chaplain Mills said. "Now, for the first time all year, we're playing great basketball."

3

Maddening home court losses ...

One to a good team (Mississippi), one to an average team (Florida), and a molar-grinding one to a thoroughly inept team (Louisville). Unlike the battle scar, which fills the afflicted with intermittent pangs of pride, these wounds knew no glory. Not since 1989, in the days of Eddie Sutton and Emery packages, had UK lost more than two home games in a season.

In the glory road's three potholes, UK got picked off base by a combination of complacency, poor perimeter defense, and general middle-headedness. To his credit, Smith used the home court hiccups as valuable lessons for his team.

Following the Louisville debacle, Smith ordered a marathon five-hour practice to remedy the Cats' spiritless three-point defense. And after the second half meltdown against Mississippi, 6 a.m. practices became the norm. An opponent would never out-hustle UK again.

Heart-stopping wins ...

With the Rupp Arena game clock wilting away and the score tied in UK's regular season game against Arkansas, Kareem Reid's running shot in the lane deflected off the rim forcing overtime. Soon thereafter, a cult hero evolved.

Evans, the hyperactive Manhattan transfer, streaked down the court for dunks, scalded the nets from the perimeter, and saluted the crowd. Remember how the crowd chanted "MUUU?"

Overtime again seemed a certainty after Vin-dell's Drew Madala hit a three to tie UK with four seconds remaining in the teams' second rendezvous. But Nazir Mohammed's circus shot to defy the game clock jumpstarted a raucous Wildcat celebration in the Music City.

Revenge in the aforementioned Duke miracle was not assured until William Avery's 35-foot Hail Mary for the win bounced harmlessly off the backboard. And Stanford, aided by a slew of Kentucky missed free throws, misfired on two potential game-winners in its overtime loss to the Cats in San Antonio.

4

Clutch three-pointers in the Final Four ... three by fifth-year senior Jeff Sheppard in the waning moments of the Stanford win and two by fellow senior Cameron Mills in UK's title game comeback over Utah. Sheppard, who grew up idolizing Rex Chapman from his home in suburban Atlanta, spent the first four years of his Kentucky career marooned on the bench behind the likes of Tony Delk and Derek Anderson. After a career-high 27 points against Stanford and 16 more in the championship game, Sheppard replicated Delk's 1996 feat of being named the Most Valuable Player of the Final Four.

Minutes of offensive fasting by Utah ... late in the title game. Following an Alex Jensen layup that gave the Utes a 64-60 lead, Rick Majerus' fatigued troops didn't hit another field goal until five seconds remained and all suspense had vacated the Alamodome.

UK's defensive vigilantes, namely Evans, Edwards, and Turner, continually harassed Utah floor general Andre Miller into a montage of turnovers (right in the title game) and wildly errant shots.

The interior defense, a combination of Mohammed and Magloire, limited Utah center Michael Doleac to three second-half points.

5

Heroes as UK ascended to the seventh heaven ...

of the school's seventh national championship. Remember Mohammed's earthmoving improvement. Padgett's shot that felled Duke. Sheppard's late-season renaissance. Turner's unstoppable drives to the basket. Edwards' focused play in spite of personal tragedy. Evans' well-timed booster shots, and Mills' homegrown heroics.

And don't forget Tabby — who replaced a legend, outcoached a hoops genius in the title game and exceeded all expectations.

Celebrate the flawed team that climbed the ladder. Archive the transcendence. Savor these timeless keepakes.

6

7



Tubby Smith • Head Coach

The shoes to fill were huge. Former UK head coach Rick Pitino seemed to be The Chosen One. But when Pitino headed for the power and the glamour of the NBA, UK looked to Tubby Smith to keep Big Blue churning. After losing a few close games at home, fans were skeptical. But he remained true to his plan, his family and himself. No one is skeptical anymore.

Smith merges new philosophy with old results

By Rob Herbst
Sports Editor

His style is not as flamboyant as his predecessor. No Armani suits. No styling mousse needed in his hair. Few memorable one-liners for the media.

The comparisons of UK head coach Tubby Smith to former Cat boss Rick Pitino were inevitable coming into the season.

But for UK fans the ultimate comparison of a coach is success. That's when one finds a similarity between Smith and Pitino.

In his first season at UK Smith achieved the pinnacle of success. He won the national championship when plenty of doubters thought it wasn't possible.

"He's the premiere coach in college basketball today. I said this before — he got this national championship," said UK center Jamaal Magloire. "He made all the right decisions and all the right plays. It shows. We're national champions. We've got the ring and we're celebrating thanks to him."

There were times when some questioned whether all the right decisions were being made. First came a home loss to a Louisville team which ended its season with an 11-20 record.

Then came a home loss to NIT-bound Florida. Then came a home loss to Ole Miss, a first round loser in the NCAA Tournament.

Why did UK make an improbable run in the NCAA Tournament? Because of Smith.

He may have tinkered with the game plan a bit but that wasn't the key reason for UK's success. Smith brought certain intangibles to the Cats.

Had UK senior guard Jeff Sheppard not redshirted in 1996-97 he wouldn't have played for Smith. Sheppard's redshirting may have been a questionable move last year but he's grateful for the opportunity to play under Smith.

"I'm glad I redshirted last year. This year has been an awesome experience," Sheppard said. "Coach Smith made himself available to get close to the team



STEPHANIE CORDLE/Kentucky staff

THE MAN THEY CALL 'COACH' UK head coach Tubby Smith became UK's fourth coach to earn a national championship. But unlike his predecessors Adolph Rupp, Joe B. Hall, Eddie Sutton and Rick Pitino, Smith landed his school a national title in his first season at the helm.

the minute he arrived in Kentucky. We became a family. And that's why we had a little bit of success, because we have pulled so close together on and off the court."

He added, "Coach Smith taught us to be men first and taught us basketball second."

Smith was more than a basketball coach for the Cats. He was a counselor, father and basketball coach rolled into one.

When one of Smith's players needed him, Smith was there.

UK forward Scott Padgett didn't have a tremendous start to the 1997-98 basketball season. What did Padgett do to help change his playing performance? He went to Smith — something he didn't always do last season with Pitino.

"He made himself so available to us. He'll set up times individually for us to meet with him," Padgett said. "Coach Pitino had so many other things going on, so he didn't have as much time. I sat down with Coach Smith after the

loss to Louisville and that was the turning point of the season."

And he was there for other issues besides basketball.

"If there is a difference, I think it's that Coach Smith talks with us more about our personal lives," said UK center Nazr Mohammed. "Like how's your girlfriend doing whereas Coach (Pitino) seemed to focus on basketball and school."

But no matter how respected a coach is as a person, fans in the Commonwealth will still judge

coaches by victories. Smith receives high marks in that category as well. UK fans will take a national championship and Smith deserves the credit.

"A lot of credit goes to Coach Smith and his attitude that we never quit no matter how bad we're out of the game," said UK guard Cameron Mills. "The rest of the credit goes to the team who took the words Coach Smith told us about not quitting and made it our anthem throughout the whole year."



Allen Edwards • 6-5 • Senior

He came in and was slated to be a point guard. It didn't happen. Allen Edwards instead played nearly every position during his UK career. He exploded into the NCAA tourney with the kind of excitement and ability that everyone grew to love from the senior. And it helped the Cats garner the biggest prize of them all — a national title.

When it was all over, Edwards comforted by thoughts of mother

By Dave Gorman
 Staff Writer

Partying with hula girls in the sunshine, visions of playing in the NBA and an NCAA Championship.

To most people it sounds like a fantasy world, but for UK senior Allen Edwards, it is a reality.

With a wealth of summer experience and three years in Lexington under his belt, Edwards brought polished talent to this year's team. After seeing limited action during UK's championship season in 1996, Edwards briefly considered transferring to another school. However, former UK coach Rick Pitino ensured Edwards a bigger role last year — and Edwards responded, ranking fifth on the team in scoring (8.6 ppg) and third in assists (109).

Edwards started 15 consecutive games at small forward last season and played every position except center.

UK head coach Tubby Smith expected more of the same this season.

"He could be our leading scorer this season," Smith said before the season. "He is so versatile. He has stepped up and blossomed. He's got the game to do it all."

"His sophomore year when they won the championship, he should have been getting more playing time," teammate Steve Masiello said. "He sacrificed for the team. Not too many people can just sit back and swallow their pride and suck it up for the team."

The 1997-98 season marked Edwards' last wearing Wildcat blue. With two brothers playing professional basketball (Doug played for the NBA's Vancouver Grizzlies this season and Steve plays overseas), Allen has added incentive to pursue basketball as a career after school.

"Ever since I was young I would look at what (Edwards' brothers) did on and off the court," Edwards said. "I tried to do as good as they did. To see my older brother playing in the NBA and Steve overseas, it's just real-

ly something to strive for.

"This year I am more focused, I will be trying to do the things I need to do to get to the next level. This year is 'money time.'"

Though he was not making a direct reference to Pitino, who used 'money time' to earn a lucrative position with the NBA's Boston Celtics, Edwards said he held fond memories of what Pitino had done to help him improve as a player.

But, Edwards added, he likes current UK head coach Tubby Smith as well.

"Coach Smith is like a father figure," Edwards said. "He's a player coach. There is also a lot less swearing going on on the court. He is more relaxed and not in your face, although we still have the same intensity. I like the change."

Before the season, Edwards believed the sky was the limit in regards to how far this year's team could advance in the NCAA Tournament.

"We all have to depend on each other," he said at the beginning of the season. "This team can be as good as last year or previous teams. If we work together we can go as far as we want to go."

And that axiom came true as the Cats parlayed late-season efficiency into the school's seventh national championship.

But the season wasn't all good for Edwards, who lost his mother, Laura Mae, to cancer in February. He went home for her funeral and in turn missed UK's final regular season game at South Carolina.

"When I went home, a lot of people were coming by and paying their last respects ... it made me kind of sad," Edwards said. "Coming back gave me a release."

After the championship game, Edwards said he briefly spoke with his mother, whom he said has been with him since she passed away.

"After the buzzer sounded, I was just giving her thanks for watching over us," Edwards said. "After I cut down my piece of the net, I told her how much I loved her. She was a special person."



JAMES CRISP/Kennel staff

ON TO THE BIG TIME Allen Edwards maintained a positive focus throughout the season, even with the death of his mother in February. After a late-season change in play, Edwards looks to have a career in basketball after college.



Cameron Mills • 6-1 • Senior

He came to UK as a walk-on. The lovable little guy at the end of the bench. But his perimeter game made him useful as a zone-buster during his first two years. After injuries forced both Derek Anderson and Allen Edwards out of action during last year's NCAA Tournament, Mills filled in flawlessly. This year, his heroics against Duke established his spot in the annals of UK lore.

Mills used his outside game for big-time scoring contributions

By Steven Scrivner
Staff Writer

In a year where any player on the UK basketball team could take center stage on any given night, it did not come as a surprise that former walk-on Cameron Mills scored 31 points against Florida.

What came as a surprise is, despite an unlikely output from an unlikely source, the Cats still lost.

"It just wasn't as fun as last year," Mills said referring to last year's game at Arkansas when he contributed 12 points to the Cats' win. "It was great to have a great game, but it was better last year because we won."

Mills' outburst against Florida on Feb. 1 shattered his previous career high of 19 against Montana and St. Joseph's in last season's NCAA Tournament. It also topped the total number of points (29) he had scored in the 11 games preceding the Florida game. The reason: a career-high in three-pointers attempted and made (8-of-14) and, more importantly, a season-high in minutes (20).

For any shooter, rhythm is important. In his senior season, "Cam," as he is known to his teammates, had not had much of an opportunity to get in that rhythm early in the season, averaging just 10 minutes and three shots per game.

"Cam needs to warm up sometimes," forward Allen Edwards said. "It's tough to be out there for a couple of minutes and have to come back out and yet still be productive."

Mills' playing time didn't increase greatly in the NCAA Tournament but his productivity did. When Mills played minutes the Wildcats felt the benefits.

When the Wildcats rallied from a 17-point second-half deficit versus Duke, Mills' three-pointer with two minutes remaining put the Cats up for the first time in the game. It was Mills' only three-pointer of the game.

The Cats were down by 10 to Utah in the NCAA Finals. No problem. In steps Mills to hit a pair of second half three pointers to put UK on top.

"You don't think at all about shooting," Mills said. "That's why it goes in. If you're going to think about it then you'll have problems."

Mills, whose father Terry played under Adolph Rupp from 1969-1971, did not see the amount of action he had hoped early on after showcasing his long-range accuracy in last season's NCAA Tournament. Because of a depleted roster that saw swingmen Edwards and Derek Anderson sidelined, then-Coach Pitino had to give him some playing time.

Mills answered in a big way. By attracting an extra amount of attention because of his lethal shooting from the perimeter, he opened up the inside for big men Scott Padgett, Nazr Mohammed and Ron Mercer. But when the defender lost sight of him, he made them pay, connecting on 17-of-27 (63 percent) three-point attempts and ringing up 12 points per game, eight more than during the regular season.

When this season took flight, Mills undoubtedly expected to see less time on the pine and more time on the shooting range. But the emergence of Heshimu Evans and Saul Smith hampered those plans. Evans' and Smith's play eliminated the need to rotate Edwards and Jeff Sheppard as originally thought.

"I understood that Jeff was coming back," Mills said. "And both Heshimu and Saul have been playing great."

But in his usual, outspoken manner, Mills still contributed when needed. In the Cats' 75-72 win over Indiana earlier this season, Mills came off the bench and nailed four of his five first-half three-point attempts on his way to scoring 12 points and being one of only three Cats in double digits.

"He has the capability to hit three, four, five three-pointers right in a row for us and that's a big advantage for us," fellow senior Jeff Sheppard said.

Said floor general Wayne Turner: "In transition, I'm always looking for mainly Cameron because the defense isn't always used to him being in the game. If he's wide open, I'm gonna give him the shot."



JAMES CRISP *Kennel staff*

THE INSPIRATION Cameron Mills (right) scored a career-high 31 points against Florida mid-way through the season. Though his stats would never again reach such lofty heights, his perimeter marksmanship aided UK throughout.



Jeff Sheppard • 6-3 • Senior

Former UK head coach Rick Pitino recruited Sheppard because of his scoring ability. During his senior season in high school, Sheppard earned numerous honors with his gawdy 28 points per game. At UK, Shep blossomed into the scorer Pitino had envisioned, earning Final Four MVP honors after his out-of-this world heroics in the team's final three games of 1998.

Sheppard exceeds lofty expectations with NCAA heroics

By Steven Scrivner
Staff Writer

In the UK basketball media guide, Jeff Sheppard said the thing he liked best about the UK program is the expectations. Ironically, many at the beginning of the season thought he had failed to live up to the high ones placed on him this season. Not anymore.

Ron Mercer's decision to turn pro last season immediately cast the spotlight on Sheppard and had many fans across the Bluegrass expecting great things from him this year, especially after spending all of last season working on his game while being redshirted.

At the beginning of the season Sheppard played, by all standards, average, chipping in a solid 12 points, four rebounds and three assists per game.

At that time a disappointing season? Not according to him.

"I definitely would have liked to have been hitting some shots here and there to have some more points and if I had been scoring some more," the 6-foot-3 Georgia native said. "But I haven't and it's not bothering me, I'm enjoying my senior year, I'm having a good time. I think I'm improving and getting better."

That was then. Now UK has another national championship to boast about. And Sheppard was a key reason why.

Sheppard turned into a premiere player towards the end of the season and it culminated in the Final Four. He hit a career-high 27 points against Stanford and put in 16 points against Utah. For his effort, Sheppard was named Most Valuable Player of the Final Four.

In 1993, Sheppard arrived in Lexington hailed as the next Rex Chapman because of his

amazing athleticism and kangaroo-like leaping ability. (His invitation to participate in the ESPN Slam Dunk Championship in San Antonio during the Final Four is testament to that.)

As most freshmen do, Sheppard saw little action, playing only eight minutes a game.

"My freshman year was just a learning experience," he said.

His sophomore year provided a preview of what was to come as he started 27 (out of the 33) games at point guard for the Cats.

But the loss to North Carolina in the Elite Eight soured the year. "... We had a good season and we should have done a lot better."

There was no bitterness in 1996. Despite seeing his scoring average plummet to just five points and starting only one game, he called winning the national title one of the greatest moments in his sports history.

"That was just awesome," he said. "I think that was one of the best teams ever."

That season proved to be his last under fiery Coach Rick Pitino as he sat out last year's remarkable return to the championship game.

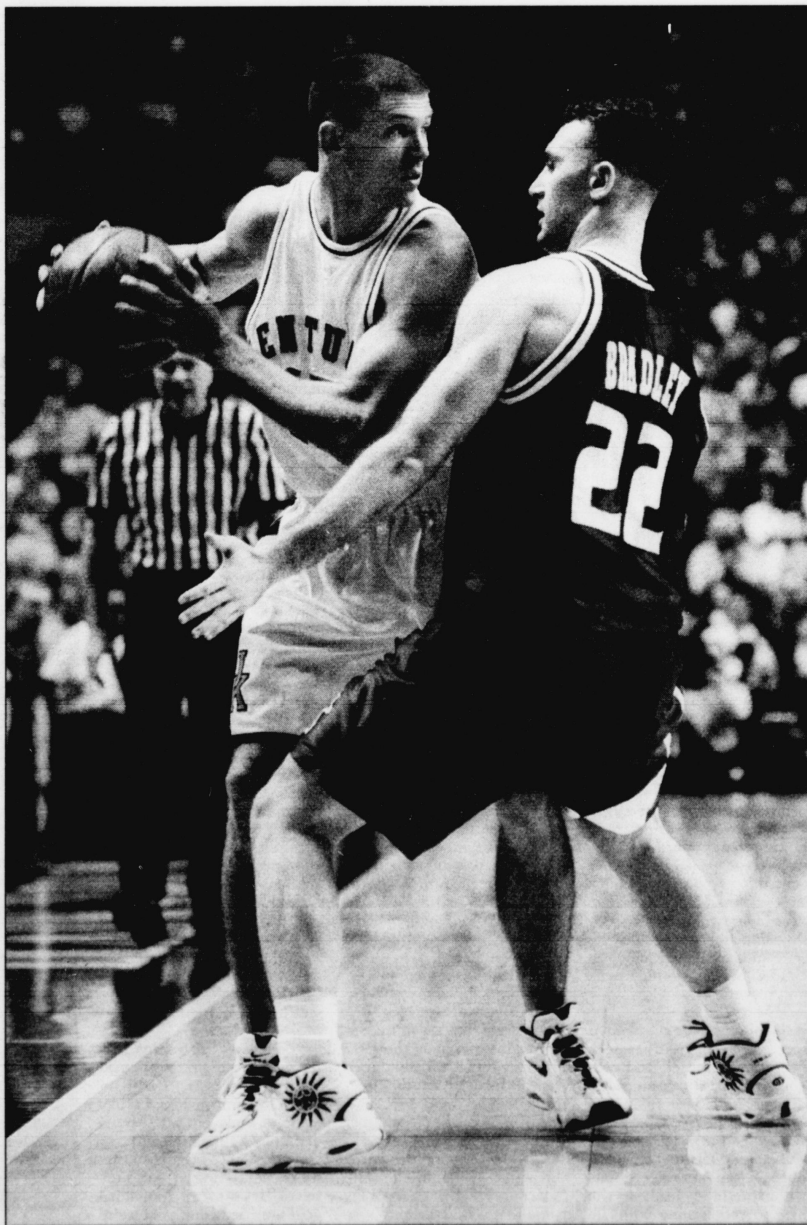
He called last season another learning experience, saying he learned a lot while watching the other guys improve.

On playing for Tubby Smith, Sheppard said, "... This year was fun even with the change with Coach Smith. It was so fun playing for him and meeting the new guys coming in."

But Sheppard will miss more than basketball.

"What I'll always remember is the things that happened off the court, the relationships and friendships that I've made," he said.

"I've just been blessed my whole five years here."



THE SHOOTER Senior Jeff Sheppard did not let down his guard all season long, pumping in big numbers on the scoreboards and helping lead the Cats to the Final Four and an NCAA Championship. He was named Final Four MVP for his efforts.

File photo



Nazr Mohammed • 6-10 • Junior

He came to UK as a project player. But former head coach Rick Pitino saw something in the 330-pound center from Chicago. That something has become one of UK's most reliable scoring threats.



Jamaal Magloire • 6-10 • Sophomore

'Jam' was an entire recruiting class by himself. In his two years with UK, Magloire has shown himself to be valuable not just as a rebounder but also as a catalyst who can single-handedly jumpstart the Cats.

Centers of attention

By Price Atkinson
Senior Staff Writer

Able to stuff tall centers with a single swat, the Cats returned two seasoned big-men to roam the paint this season.

As the "centers of attention," Jamaal Magloire and Nazr Mohammed combined for a dominant twin-tower tandem which helped lead the Cats' to its seventh national championship.

"I think the center spot with Nazr and Jamaal is pretty solid," Smith said before the season. "I think they have shown why they are two of the top big men in the country."

Combining to start 34 of UK's 40 games last season, Magloire finished his freshman campaign averaging 4.9 points per game and 4.4 rebounds a contest while Mohammed added 7.9 ppg and 5.8 rpg.

Magloire began the 1997-98 campaign as the team's starting center and upped his scoring average to 7.1 points per game. However, prior to UK's game against Ohio University, UK head coach elected to start Mohammed in the middle.

Smith said at the time he felt the switch would benefit both players.

He was right. Mohammed blossomed into an All-Southeastern Conference center and was tabbed by many as one of the premier post players in the country. In his starting role, Mohammed emerged as one of the Cats' leading offensive forces, averaging 12.1 points per game and leading the team in rebounding with 7.4 boards per game.

Magloire, who seemed comfortable with his reserve role, came alive in the NCAA

Tournament, providing key bursts of energy and defensive tenacity when coming off the bench.

Though Magloire and Mohammed share some common physical traits — each stands at 6-foot-10 and weighs 240 pounds — the similarities end there.

The long-armed native of Toronto, Magloire boasts the defensive skills of a true center and his presence on the court is felt by others.

"I feel that my work ethic is much better than it was last year," Magloire said. "I feel so much more confident and stronger."

On the flip side, Mohammed is the finesse player with an arsenal of offensive talent.

Coming into the season, Mohammed was feeling confident about much of his game. Having shed nearly 90 pounds since coming to Lexington as an overweight 330-pound project, Mohammed had earned greater quickness and mobility.

He had become exactly what former UK head coach Rick Pitino had envisioned three years ago when Mohammed was recruited out of Kenwood High School.

A nearly complete player. Not included?

Free-throw shooting. During UK's painful 83-79 loss to Arizona in the 1997 NCAA Final, Mohammed went 0-for-6 from the free-throw line.

It led to a simple summer workout regimen.

"I worked on free throws," Mohammed said. "Of course that was part of my game that wasn't alright."

Mohammed said with Magloire's strengths, they make a pretty good couple.

"Jam being a great shot-

blocker and good rebounder, it's going to put a lot of pressure on the teams in the post," he said.

"It'll take a lot of slack off each other's back as far as the pressure being focused on one of the two of us," Magloire said. "Me and Nazr are looking forward to playing with each other."

This brings up another question Cat fans have been asking: Will they play at the same time?

Last year, Rick Pitino elected to use Magloire and Mohammed interchangeably rather than simultaneously. The first year Smith, recognizing the strength of his team being the frontcourt, gave a pleasing answer to Cat fans.

"There will be times Mohammed and Magloire will play together," Smith said.

Of course, the idea eventually came to fruition. Smith, most notably during the Ohio University game, played the two as a center-power forward tandem on occasion.

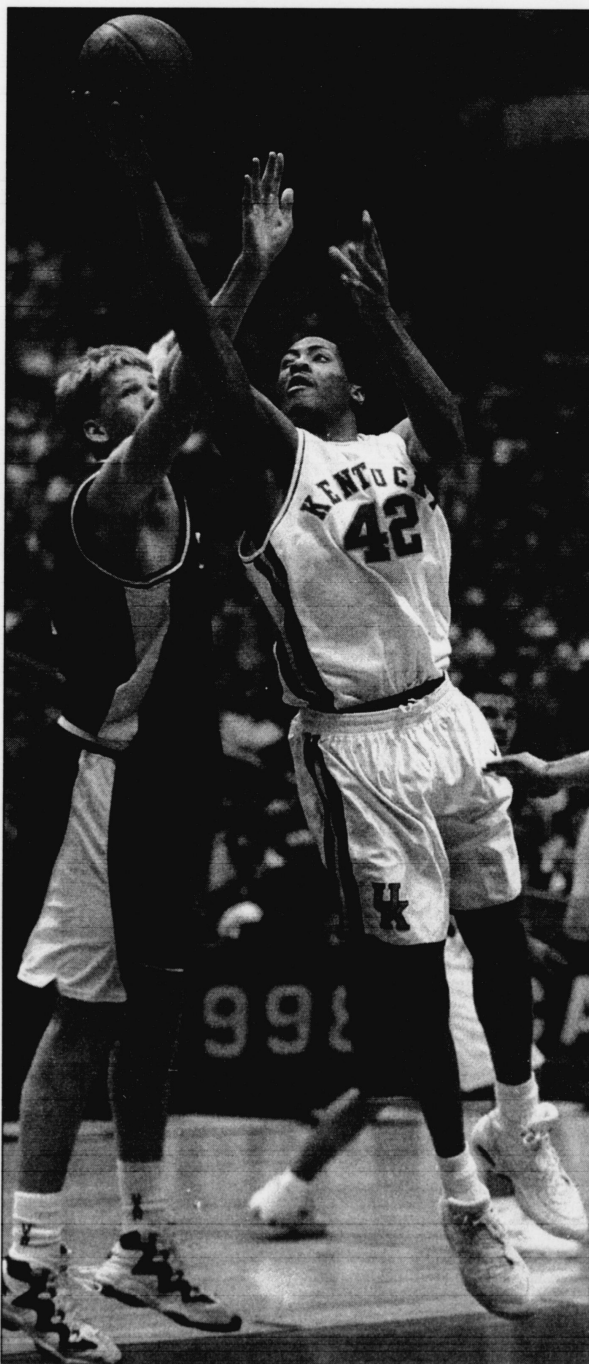
But as the season progressed, Smith believed the combination frequently put the Cats at a distinct speed disadvantage.

Instead, Smith typically used them interchangeably.

Nonetheless, Magloire said he has learned a lot from Mohammed.

"I feel we are getting better every day," Magloire said before the season. "I still am not at the point where I'd like to be as a player, but Nazr is definitely helping me a lot."

"We just realize that we're not doing it for ourselves. It's not an individual goal but it's a team goal we're trying to accomplish and that's winning an NCAA Championship this year." Goal accomplished.



MATT BARTON Kessel staff

THE ENFORCER Jamaal Magloire (right) was a lackluster starter during the first stages of the season. But in his new role as a bench contributor, Magloire made those around him better through dunks, yells, blocks and Wojo-style bodyslams.



Heshimu Evans • 6-6 • Junior

He came to UK from Manhattan College, where he was the star. Upon his arrival in Lexington, Evans was near the bottom of the totem pole. But throughout, he was able to find a key role within the program as a tireless worker and a team-oriented player. Evans became UK's blast from the bench and his performances against Utah and Duke were magical.

Evans finds a new start in a familiar environment

By Jay G. Tate
Sports Editor

Somewhere in the hustle and controlled chaos of Jamaica, N.Y., there's an autographed UK practice jersey stashed away in one of the hundreds of nondescript offices that encompass the land just outside New York City. The jersey rarely sees the light of day, but still manages to illuminate its surroundings.

The man who signed the jersey is from these parts, the New York City boroughs, having graduated from Evander Childs High School in the Bronx, but the jersey doesn't hang in his mother's home. Nor does it decorate the rafters at Childs or Trinity Pawling Prep, where he led his team to a 22-0 season in 1994.

Nor is the jersey associated with the Gauchos — the famed AAU team for which he played alongside city prep legends Stephon Marbury and Felipe Lopez.

Instead, it sits in the office of Fran Fraschilla, head basketball coach at St. John's University.

"It's something I keep very close to me," Fraschilla said of the framed practice jersey, signed by UK junior forward Heshimu Evans. "He's tremendous in so many ways — the jersey is a way to somehow keep him close by."

Though Fraschilla now spends many of his winter nights working the sidelines of the vaunted Big East Conference against college basketball giants like Georgetown and Syracuse, there was a time not long ago when he was a young coach at Manhattan College squaring off against Niagara and St. Peter's.

After spending three years as an assistant at Providence College, Fraschilla accepted the head coaching job at Manhattan in 1992.

And it was at Manhattan where Evans and Fraschilla crossed paths.

"After high school, Heshimu went to a preparatory school and I think a lot of people forgot about him," Fraschilla said. "But we kept track of him and we got lucky because his family was from close by."

Evans played two years for Fraschilla at Manhattan, helping the Jaspers to consecutive NCAA Tournament berths in both 1995 and 1996. During his time at Manhattan, Evans showed his worth in a variety of ways.

There were the formal accolades: Rookie of the Year in the Mid-Atlantic Athletic Conference his freshman season, All-MAAC in his sophomore year.

But there were the other ways, the more important ways, which garnered no public credit. Fraschilla likes to tell a story about the time during the 1994-95 season when Evans was selected to guard the conference's best player, Charles Smith of Rider.

Evans gave Smith little room to breathe and shut down the Rider star, Fraschilla said, providing the Jaspers an easy road to a key win.

"The next day," Fraschilla said, "Heshimu's limping all around the office and I ask him what's wrong. He had stayed in defensive position so long during the game that he had injured his abdominal muscles.

"That's what kind of player Heshimu is."

So when Fraschilla accepted the head coaching job at St. John's in 1996, it was a surprise to some that Evans didn't make the cross-town trip to follow his head coach into big-time college basketball.

Evans said Fraschilla never asked.

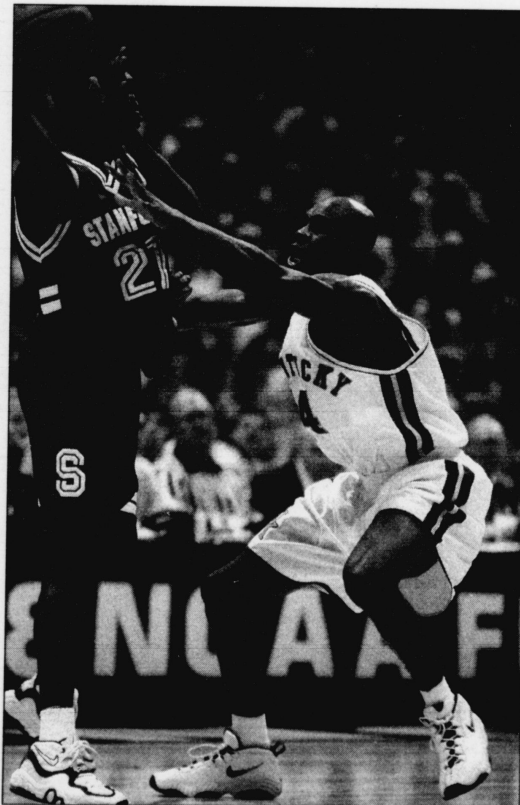
"I never really sat down and talked with Coach Fraschilla about it," Evans said of his coach's decision to leave Manhattan.

"I would have gone to St. John's but we never talked about it."

Spurned but not disheartened, Evans elected to go where he felt most comfortable. Having spent a summer working Pitino's summer basketball camp and familiarizing himself with the UK program, he elected to head for Lexington — this time to play.

"I really like Lexington and this program," Evans said. "I had been here and had gotten to know some people, so that made me want to come back."

But part of the reason Evans came here, Fraschilla said, was an opportunity to play for Pitino.



MATT BARTON/Kernel staff

THE WARRIOR Heshimu Evans, whose first name in Swahili means "strong black warrior," became one of the Cats' most important defensive players during the 1997-98 season. His undying work ethic has made him a crowd favorite.

The former UK coach had gained the reputation of rewarding players who worked hard.

For Evans, and his undying work ethic, it would have been the perfect match, but Evans insists he committed to UK first and Pitino second.

"I knew there was an opportunity for him to leave when I came here in the first place," Evans said. "We wanted (Pitino) to stay, but we have Tubby (Smith), and he's done a great job so far, and I'm excited about playing for him."

Though Pitino's departure

meant Evans never had the chance to perform for the former coach, Evans' teammates have been more than impressed with his performances both on and off the court.

"The sky's the limit for him," center Jamaal Magloire said of his former roommate. "He helped me out a lot off the court ... giving me advice on life and classes and social issues."

"He's got that Derek Anderson charisma," forward Scott Padgett said. "You know, he gets that rebound and gives that big yell. He's a warrior on the

boards, and he brings a lot of energy."

A warrior? It's more accurate than it may sound initially. "Heshimu" in Swahili translates as "strong black warrior." That warrior quality comes through in Evans' relentless defense and rebounding — Nazr Mohammed said Evans is "an amazing force on the offensive glass."

His first season with the Wildcats saw him finish as the team's strongest presence off the bench, contributing 8.7 points and 5.4 rebounds per game. Perhaps his biggest moment of the season came against Duke, when his three-pointer from the top of the key started UK's furious rally which landed the Cats into their third Final Four in as many years.

"For me, I still can't believe I have a piece of this net here," Evans said as he listlessly twisted his two-feet-of-the-Tropicana-Field net after the Duke win. "It's been a long trip."

Though Evans became one of UK's most reliable offensive and defensive forces this season and nearly single-handedly saved the Cats from key tournament losses, Evans' teammates think of something else when asked about their reserve power forward.

"The dude is a neat freak," Padgett said. "(UK guard Jeff) Sheppard and I are clean, but he's the cleanest ever. I mean if one thing is out of order, he can't handle it. He's always cleaning."

Evans admitted cleanliness is something he values — he's the only UK player with hangers in his locker. And it's a trait that's been with him his whole life.

"I've always been a neat fanatic — my mother never had to tell me to clean my room," Evans said with a sheepish grin. "I can't see things out of place — it all has to be in order."

So how much time per week does he spend cleaning his room?

"None," he said. "It never gets dirty."

After a reporter asked another question about his cleanliness, Evans laughed and said, "That's OK. That's enough about that."

"As clean as there ever was," Fraschilla said. "We used to leave Coke cans and paper on the floor just to frustrate him."


Wayne Turner • 6-2 • Junior

When his time came, he was ready. After learning how to be a point guard for almost two seasons, Turner had his first coming out party during last season's NCAA Tournament. But he wasn't done. He earned two MVP awards during this year's championship run and the smile on his face after his second national title was as wide as ever. This was his magnum opus.

Gradual acclimation to UK expectations allows Turner to excel

By **Matthew May**
Assistant Sports Editor

Every athlete has an idol that they pattern their style of play after.

For UK's lightning-quick junior point guard Wayne Turner, former Detroit Piston great Isiah Thomas and current Boston Celtic Kenny Anderson were the heroes.

Growing up in Boston's inner-city, Turner spent every moment possible on the courts outside his home, striving to be like Isiah and Anderson.

"I grew up playing at the playground everyday," Turner said. "It could be below zero degrees, but we would still play. I always wanted to be like Isiah and Kenny Anderson, because they were point guards that had a scorer's mentality."

Now after being the point man for a national champion team Turner has people looking up to him.

Coming out of Beaver Country Day High School, where he averaged 36.1 points and 10.1 assists a game, Turner arrived at UK as a slasher and scorer. Not long after, former coach Rick Pitino explained to Turner that everyone rebounds at UK.

"When I got here, Coach Pitino told me that everyone rebounds here, even guards, so I've tried hard to grab a lot of rebounds each game."

To assure continued effort on the boards, Turner set a goal for himself to grab 10 rebounds in a game before he leaves the Cats. Did he accomplish that goal? Close.

"I've been close to grabbing 10 rebounds," he said. "Against Florida my freshman year I came close (he had eight) and this year against Canisius, I had seven or eight at halftime, but didn't get it. I was pretty disappointed in myself."

When it came time for Turner to pick a college, he couldn't turn down the prestige of the UK basketball tradition.

"I always told myself if a school like UK, North Carolina or Duke recruited me, I was going to take a look at it," Turner said. "When I got here, the players treated me really well.

Everything was just perfect here."

Once here, Turner was allowed to slowly move into the spotlight, as he learned the college game by being an understudy to former UK point guard Anthony Epps.

"Anthony taught me a lot," he said. "Just by speaking with him, I knew he was a guy who had the desire to win. I told myself to do some of the things that Anthony did."

This season Turner had the opportunity to teach Saul Smith those same intangibles Epps taught him.

"It's been great," Smith said during the season. "Learning from Wayne has been one of the best things that ever happened to me. He has tremendous knowledge and knows what college basketball is all about."

After spending most of last season coming off the bench for Epps, Turner became the starter in time for the post-season and never looked back, leading UK to the NCAA championship game.

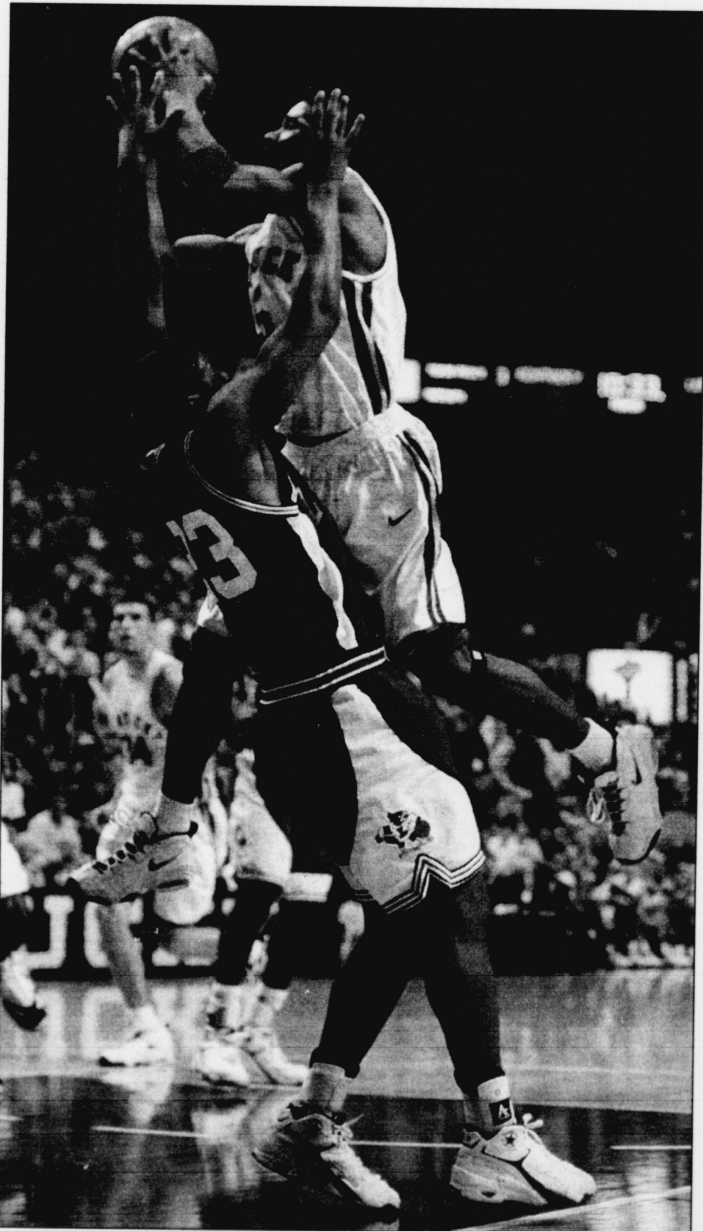
As Ron Mercer drew continuous double-teams, "Burner Turner" sliced and diced opposing defenses to the tune of 12.2 points a game and a 3-to-1 assist to turnover ratio.

This season there was some grumblings over Turner's lack of aggression penetrating the lane. It was a question to which fellow guard Jeff Sheppard has an answer.

"Last year people didn't know about him," Sheppard said. "Things were open for him, but now they know about him and make him shoot. But when he catches the ball ready to shoot, he knocks it down."

Despite less slicing and dicing, Turner proved to be an invaluable leader who leads by the example he sets for his teammates. He used his smothering defense to produce turnovers and excite his team. As a result of his hard work, he was named Most Valuable Player of the Southeastern Conference Tournament and the South Region, due particularly to his performance against Duke in the South Region Final.

As for Turner's legacy after he's gone? He said, "I want to be remembered as a kid who was really happy to be here, respected everyone and loved playing for Kentucky basketball."



STEPHANIE CORDLE *Kernel staff*

THE SLASHER Wayne Turner had another phenomenal postseason in 1998, earning MVP honors in both the NCAA Regionals and the SEC Tournament. His penetrations against Duke helped lift the Cats to victory.


Scott Padgett • 6-9 • Junior

How many basketball players can say they have gone through what Scott Padgett did to win a national title? Not many. After missing the 1996 championship because of academic standing, Padgett watched from his telemarketing job. Now, résumé-padding job and goatee gone, Padgett reassumed his role this year as a dominant post player.

Padgett loses hair, finds accolades with dynamic floor game

By Steven Scrivner
Staff Writer

When UK head coach Tubby Smith issued an edict on Dec. 30 that his players shave all their facial hair, Scott Padgett took the hardest hit: losing the black goatee he sported through the first 13 games.

Though no known link exists between facial hair and a player's performance, ignoring the facts surrounding Padgett's rise from contributor to leader of the pack this season was difficult.

The junior forward's play in the post was a major reason the Wildcats went from possible contenders to champions.

"Since the Louisville game, I've been trying to play a lot more down low and I've had some success," Padgett said. "It's natural tendency if you start playing better, you start playing harder."

After getting off to a quiet start this season for the Cats, the 6-foot-9 Padgett feasted on SEC opponents.

Oddly, Padgett's superb play began when his game disappeared.

In his first goatee-less game, against Vanderbilt on Jan. 3, Padgett struck for 13 points and 14 rebounds in UK's 71-62 home win.

At Mississippi State a week later, he scorched the Bulldogs for 23 points and 10 rebounds as the Cats pulled out a 77-71 victory.

While Padgett got more familiar with his razor, Smith was all smiles about Padgett's rediscovered knack for scoring in the paint.

"I don't think it's as much as moving him inside as it is him realizing where his potential is," UK head coach Tubby Smith said during the season. "He needs to get closer to the basket so he can draw more fouls."

Logically, the more times an 87 percent free-throw shooter goes to the line, the more points

he'll score.

"When you're 6-9 and you can do the things that he can do — play inside and outside — it makes you a real threat to opposing teams," Smith said. "You don't find that in power forwards. Most of them are not as versatile as a Scott Padgett. So that creates a real match-up problem."

In UK's 70-67 win over Alabama on Jan. 21, Padgett tallied a game-high 24 points, including four in the final 31 seconds to help hold off the upset-minded Crimson Tide.

Three days later against Tennessee, a place that has traditionally given the Cats problems, Padgett came up big again, this time with 20 points and seven rebounds in the 85-67 drubbing of the Vols.

But that effort was overshadowed when he was ejected after being slapped with two technical fouls — one for taunting and another for arguing a call.

"I asked the (referee) if I moved my pivot foot, and I found out after the game that he thought I cursed at him," Padgett said.

"I shouldn't have complained about the call in the first place."

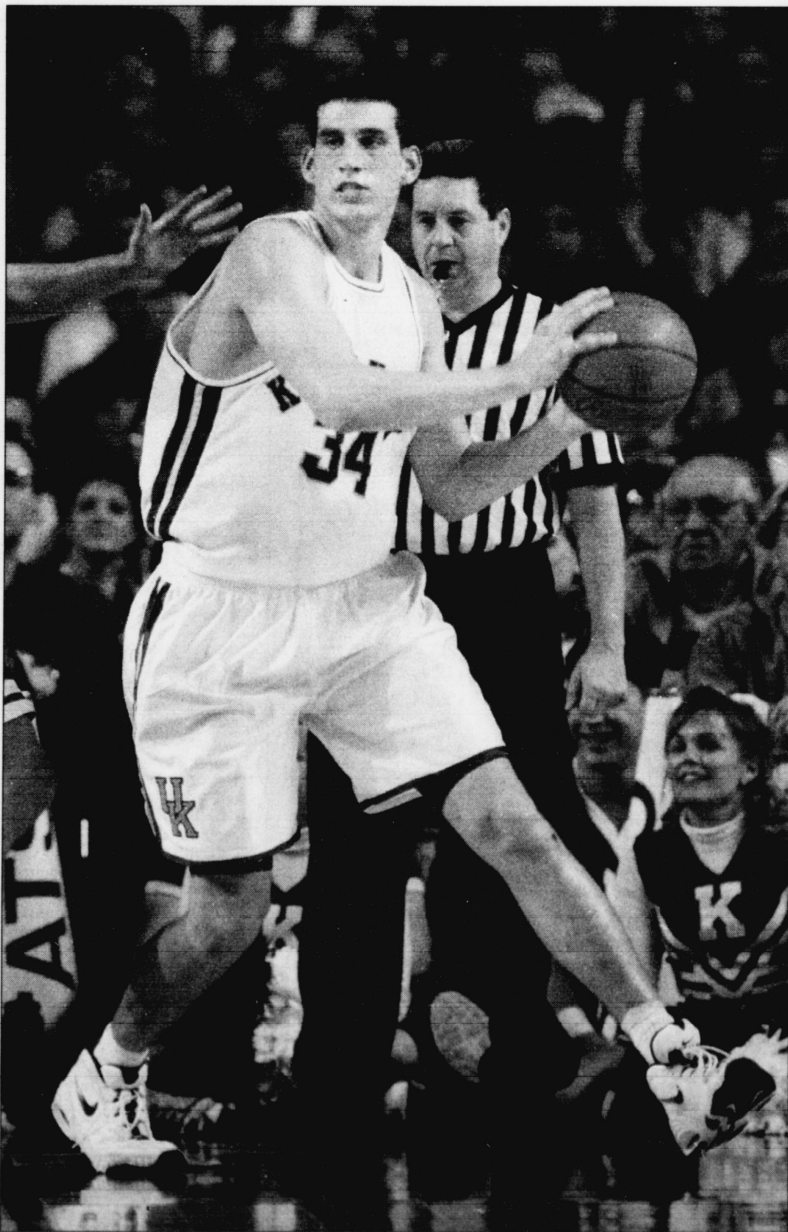
Asked if he expected it to happen again, Smith, with eyes as big as silver dollars, replied, "No. Not as long as he's playing here at Kentucky."

This was Padgett's first NCAA Championship. He missed out on the 1996 team because of academic problems. Instead of being on the court that year, Padgett was busy as a telemarketer and doing landscaping.

He nearly sipped the ultimate taste of victory when the Cats advanced to the national championship game before succumbing to Arizona. Being that close helped motivate Padgett this year.

"I can still see (Miles) Simon hitting those shots against us," Padgett said before the season started.

He doesn't have to think about that anymore.



JAMES CRISP Kernel staff

STONE COLD Scott Padgett revealed his love of professional wrestling during Media Day. Much like one of his favorite wrestlers, "Stone Cold" Steve Austin, Padgett unloaded his move — the Three-Point Piledriver — on opponents all year.



University Nights

Eastland Lanes
750 E. New Circle Rd.
Lexington,
KY 40505

Every Wednesday & Thursday Night
9 p.m. to close

Southland Lanes
205 Southland Dr.
Lexington,
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March 30, 1998 • Lexington

Anyone who was there knew the drill. Buzzer sounds, run like hell, jump like hell and scream "Go Big Blue" until your voice goes hoarse. Students lived up to these expectations and more as more than 15,000 people packed Celebration Corner after the Cats won the national title.



JAMES CRISP *Kernel staff*

JAYWALKING Thousands of rabid UK fans stormed the streets following the Wildcats' 78-69 win over Utah.

Cops, beer and basketball freaks

By Mat Herron
News Editor

Bedlam. Hysteria. An immense, seething, maniacal glob whose nucleus lies at the only intersection that matters. And when the horn bellowed "the end" in the second biggest state in the union, the glob from the Bluegrass riled, shook and teemed with celebration.

Graphically, art education sophomore Amy Wagner utters, "This is fucking awesome."

Truly. Johnny Law all but laid down his sovereign badge and melted into The Party That Killed '96. Students toted 12-packs of beer and liquor in brown-paper bags down the streets to feed the massive cauldron of booze, joyful noises and if students were lucky, nudity.

"This is my first time out here, and I've never seen anything like it," said Jonathan Goolsby, a foreign language and international economics freshman. "This is P-H-A-T phat; it's the phattest party I've ever seen."

Among the insides of the pulsating, intensified mosh pit were jesters in UK garb: white hats with blue Ks embroidered on them, and a shirt, proclaiming,

um, something rather suggestive: "Utah sucks" on the front, "Duke swallows," on the back.

Drivers, yes drivers, honked again and again to push their way through the amoeba-like organism without trying to become a victim like the blue Volkswagen van which was almost totally submerged in the throng.

In front of 270 Kentucky Avenue, minstrels stretched out their instruments and jammed.

A beer-filled squirt gun found its target in several parched mouths.

Toilet paper sailed from above the rooftops as the fiddlers were dancing and cheering. Fireworks screamed and popped.

Three helicopters circled to catch this glob in action.

"I always knew UK would win," said business freshman Jason Snipes, "but Utah kind of scared me."

What's scary is a Utah fan in Lexington.

The glob grows, spreading up to High Street, over to Aylesford, where side of the street screams "blue," the other "white."

Back and forth.

Back and forth.

It spread up Woodland, so close to South Campus it could have almost kissed it. Thirty Lexington police officers guarded the William T. Young Library.

Sgt. Artie Green, a veteran on hand from the '96 inaugural madness, observed the situation.

"The crowd (in '96) didn't go any further than SuperAmerica," he said. "This crowd looks a lot bigger."

And so it grew. Past Kentucky Avenue almost to Lafayette. Almost to Republic Bank's corner.

A lady meandered the crowd with two bumper stickers that boasted a new saying in blue letters soon to be on the edge of Kentucky lips: "Cats Antonio '98."

"It's insane, crazy, incredible. Me and my buddies just came out to hang out and drink a lot of beer," said anthropology senior Shane Hinkle.

Even a voice from Final Fours past added his congratulations.

"I'm just happy for Jeff, Allen and the rest of the guys," said ex-UK point guard Anthony Epps. "When coach P left, people didn't really give us a chance to be back, but you've got to give a lot of credit to Coach Smith; he did a great job."

The mix, some say, continued into the wee hours of the morning. But there was no place psychology junior Lauren Higdon would rather be.

"Wow."

Assistant News Editor Jessica Coy, Campus Editor Aaron Sanderford and Senior Staff Writer Jill Erwin contributed to this story.

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March 31, 1998 • Lexington

It was their chance to revel in the happiness. The 1997-98 Cats came home to enjoy with their fans the taste of victory. It wasn't supposed to happen this way. The Cats weren't supposed to win. But they did. And thousands of fans from all around the Bluegrass filed into Rupp Arena for a final chance to catch a glimpse of their heroes.

Fans line up early for Rupp celebration ceremony

By Jill Erwin
Senior Staff Writer

When the National Champion banner was displayed March 31 in Rupp Arena, Asteria Steele was just glad she could be there.

She had one request when the title game started.

"Oh Lord, not another close one," she said. "Not another overtime."

With the Cats down 10 at the break, Steele and seven others piled into a van in Harlan County on a direct route to the team welcome in Rupp.

The van was stuffed to the maximum with random family members and friends sitting in every available spot, including Charly Wilkerson taking up a piece of carpet at everyone's feet.

When the buzzer went off and UK was champion once again, the van had to make an emergency pit stop on the side of the road for fear all the screaming and celebrating would force it there otherwise.

"It was so much adrenaline," Steele said. "Everyone was shouting and screaming."

The group got in line at 1 a.m. and were the fourth group there. The result: front row seats for Steele's first-ever visit to Rupp.

"It's so big," she said, looking around at the jerseys hung overhead. "I'm just so amazed."

The Cats piled out of the charter bus, led by Coach Tubby Smith, and headed into the circle of chairs. With Kool and the Gang's "Celebration" piped into the arena, the center of the circle became an impromptu "Soul Train" exhibition, with Saul Smith and Cameron Mills running the cameras.

The dancing wasn't the only emotion expressed at the team's return from San Antonio. From the second he stepped off the bus, Scott Padgett never set down the championship trophy. He carried it with him when the championship banner was raised. He held it in his lap when he was listening to Tubby speak.

When Coach Smith was introduced and invited to the microphone, the crowd and players erupted into a standing ovation lasting more than a minute, with the now-expected chant of "Tubby, Tubby" thrown in for good measure.

Tubby gave thanks to his wife, Donna, for all of her support, and then, as if the people of the state didn't love him enough, he thanked them as well.

"The outpouring here and the love affair that you all have for Kentucky basketball and for this



END OF THE ROAD Members of the 1998 National Championship team raised the banner into the rafters of Rupp Arena before a standing ovation.

program is unbelievable and second to none," Smith said.

The three seniors took their turn addressing the crowd, with all fighting back the emotion that was evident in their speeches.

Allen Edwards, who played through the pain he felt in the death of his mother, thanked the

fans for the numerous letters of support he received.

"Some I still haven't finished reading," Edwards said. "It's been a wonderful four years for myself. I don't think it could have been better."

Jeff Sheppard remembered the support he has been given as well.

"I never played a game at Kentucky where there weren't a lot of fans," he said. "I thank you."

Cameron Mills said he wanted to express his thanks to Tubby.

"I don't think you'll ever know how much our relationship means to me," he said as he pointed to his coach.

Mills then took it one step further, and thanked Tubby's predecessor, Rick Pitino.

"I want to thank Rick for teaching not only Al, Shep and myself, but the rest of these guys out here, how to play this game."

Signs of support for the team were abundant, from the usual "We Are the Champions" to the more creative "Notorious CATS Always Awesome." Even Athletics Director C.M. Newton was immortalized on posterboard, with credit given to the job he's done: "Newton's Law: Always First Class."

Newton returned the love to the fans in attendance.

"The University of Kentucky has truly made me so proud," Newton said. "You are the greatest fans in the world."

Donna Smith, who was given what was believed to be the first-ever "National Coach's Wife of the Year" Award, had just one thing to say to the crowd. "You all are awesome."

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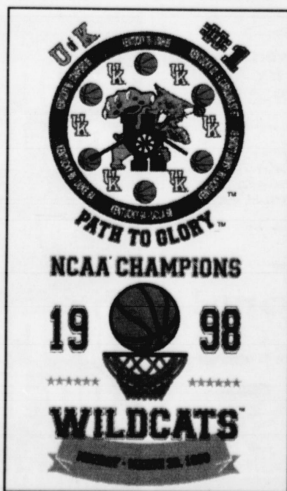
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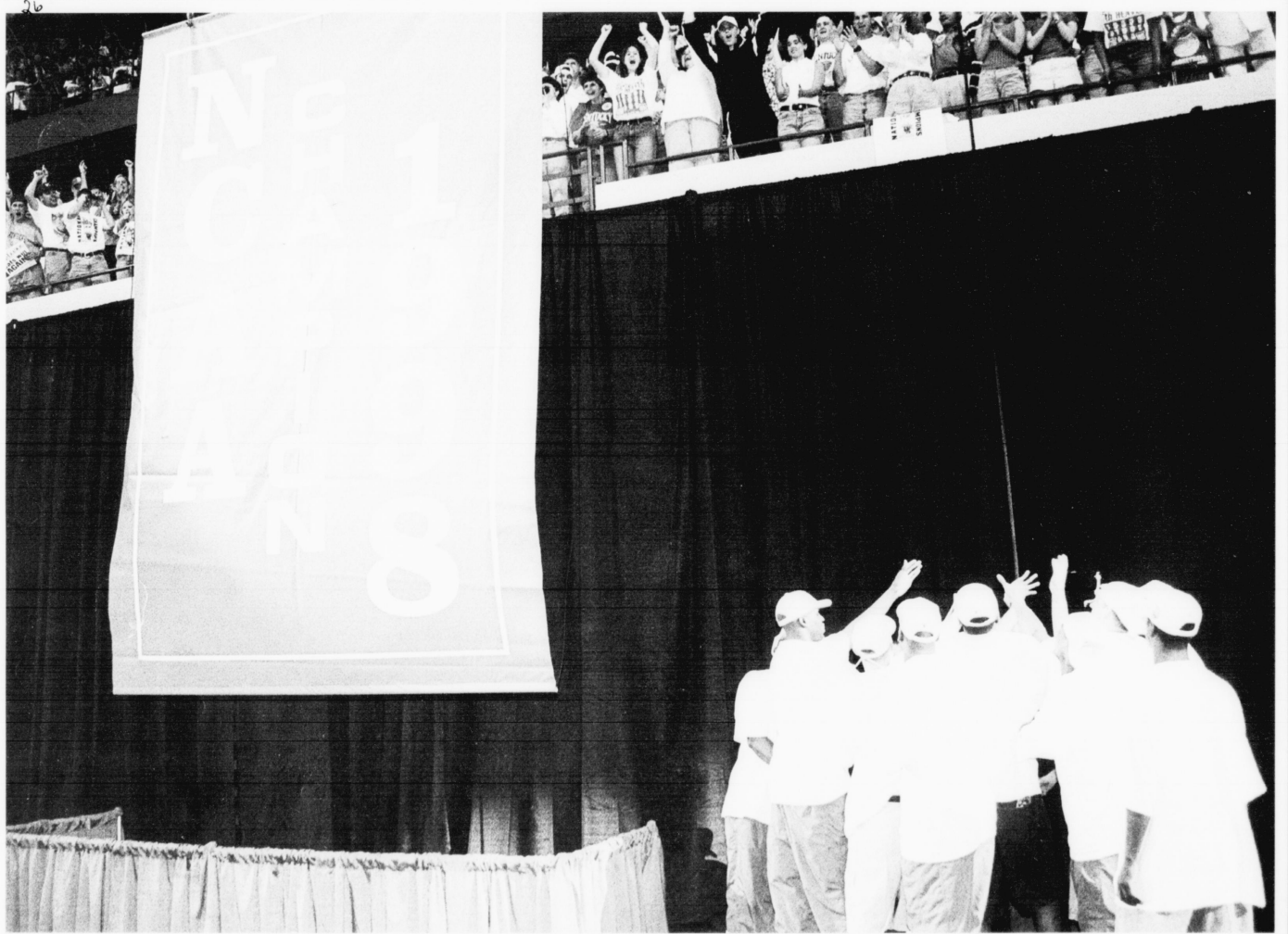
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