

# KENTUCKY

## Alumni

SUMMER 2012



Gr8ness: UK Wildcats Are National Champs!

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# 'One for the Ages...'

Calipari, Wildcats deliver championship No. 8

By Kelli Elam





**A**s the game clock finally made its way to 0:00 and confetti began raining down on the Superdome floor, Wildcat fans finally exhaled and celebrated a national championship. The University of Kentucky Wildcats defeated Kansas 67-59 in the NCAA title game in New Orleans on April 2 to earn the school's eighth title.

It was a celebration 14 years in the making, as the Wildcats won the first title since 1998.

"I am happy for our players and I am happy for our fans," Calipari said after the game. "This is a great thing for our school and our state."

Calipari called it, "one for the ages." It certainly was.

“I wanted everybody to see, we were the best team this season,” Calipari said after claiming his first national title as a head coach. “We were the best team. I wanted this to be one for the ages.”

The Cats were led in scoring by sophomore Doron Lamb with 22 points.

Despite struggling from the field, freshman center Anthony Davis dominated the game, finishing with 16 rebounds, six blocks, five assists, three steals, along with six points and was named the Final Four Most Outstanding Player.

“I have to give credit to my team,” Davis said. “Without them, I would not have been able to get any of this praise. All the credit goes to them.”

Lamb, fellow sophomore Terrence Jones and freshman Michael Kidd-Gilchrist were named to the Final Four All-Tournament Team.

The national championship capped off one of the most successful seasons in recent memory. UK finished with a NCAA record 38 wins with only two losses by a combined eight points. Considered the favorite to win it all for most of the season, the young, super-talented Wildcats did not falter under the heavy pressure of expectations.

“This team deserves all the accolades that they’ve been getting,” Calipari said. “And what I wanted them to show today is that we were not just a talented team, we were a defensive team, and we were a team that shared the ball. I wanted everybody to see it because it became, ‘They’re more talented than everybody.’ We were the best team this season. We were the best team. The most efficient team. We shared the ball.”

Senior Darius Miller, who broke the UK record for career games played with 152, struggled to find the words to describe the feeling of winning the title.

“I can’t really explain it or put it into words,” Miller said. “All the hard work that we put in this year, the sacrifices that people have made on this team means a lot, especially with these guys. We’ve grown as brothers. We’ve had a lot of fun with this. I can’t really put into words how it feels.”

Kentucky’s road to the Final Four began in nearby Louisville, where the top seed in the South and the overall No. 1 Wildcats defeated No. 16 seed Western Kentucky 81-66 and No. 8 seed Iowa State 87-71. Next stop was Atlanta, where UK avenged an earlier regular season loss to Indiana, defeating the No. 4 seeded Hoosiers 102-90. Next up, Kentucky built a 20-point halftime lead and went on to defeat No. 3 seed Baylor 82-70 in the regional final to advance to its second Final Four in two years and the 15th in the school’s history. UK defeated in-state rival Louisville 69-61 in the national semifinal to advance to the title game on April 2.

Calipari and the team returned to Lexington on April 3 to a celebration 14 years in the making. Thousands of fans met the team at the airport and lined the streets as the caravan made its way to Rupp Arena where a full house waited to celebrate No. 8 and hang another championship banner in the rafters. ■

After leading Kentucky to its eighth national championship, all five starters from the team announced on April 17 they would enter their names in this year’s NBA Draft.

Sophomores Doron Lamb and Terrence Jones, and freshmen Anthony Davis, Michael Kidd-Gilchrist, below, and Marquis Teague are all projected as first-round picks in the upcoming draft, which will take place on June 28 in the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J.

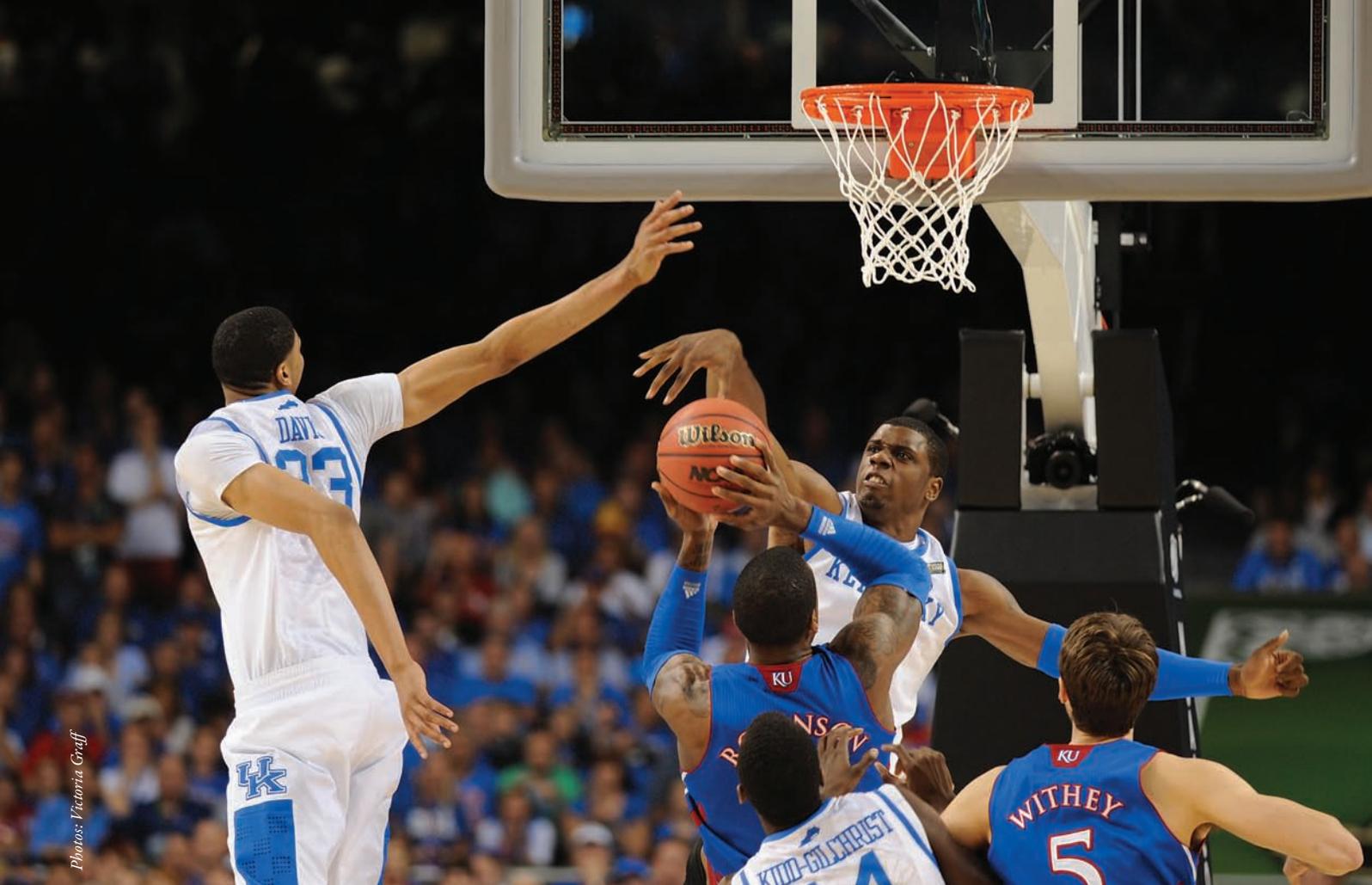
UK has had seven first-round draft picks in the last two years.



Twany Beckham, Terrence Jones and Darius Miller celebrate after the Wildcats defeat Kansas.



Photos: Victoria Graff



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### Davis completes record-breaking season

UK freshman Anthony Davis had one of the most memorable freshman seasons in Wildcat basketball history. The center from Chicago, Ill., swept all but one of the seven major Player of the Year awards, winning the Naismith Trophy as the Men's College Player of the Year, Adolph Rupp Trophy, USBWA, Basketball Times and Associated Press awards. Davis is the first Wildcat to ever win the Naismith Award and only the second freshman — Kevin Durant won in 2007.

Davis finished the season first on the NCAA all-time freshman block list with 186, and he tied the NCAA Championship game record for blocks (6). The 2012 Final Four Most Outstanding Player, Davis averaged 13.7 points, 12.3 rebounds and 4.8 blocks in the NCAA Tournament. As a team, UK set a new NCAA record for blocks with 344.

Davis, projected as the overall No. 1 pick in the 2012 NBA Draft, averaged a team-leading 14.4 points and 10.2 rebounds per game. He set a new mark in the Southeastern Conference for blocks enroute to earning league Player of the Year, Freshman of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year and first-team All-SEC selection.



Photo: UK Athletics