

Athletics Report for Board of Trustees Meeting, June 29

Sports Report

- Since we were last together in February, our winter and spring sports have wrapped up competition for the year.
- Numerous teams reached the national championship events in their sports.
- Highlights included the STUNT team notching a school-record 30 wins and finishing second in the nation.
- The rifle team had a fourth-place NCAA finish.
- The men's swimming and diving team had its best NCAA finish in 16 years.
- We also want to send a shout-out to the women's golf team for a spectacular comeback in the final round of the NCAA Regional. On the last day, the Wildcats were 14 strokes out of contention to advance to the national tournament. But the team roared back, rallying within one shot behind on the 18th hole, when Raleygh Simpson holed out from 143 yards for an eagle – moving the Wildcats from one shot behind to one shot ahead. C.A. Carter was still on the course, and on her last four holes, rolled in four straight birdies to clinch the Wildcats' advancement to the national finals.
- In the Directors' Cup national all-sports standings, we completed the year of competition in 27th place among the 365 schools in NCAA Division I.
- This marks the 14th consecutive year that UK has finished among the nation's top 10 percent of Division I athletics programs.

Academic Achievements

- Last month at Commencement, we had 98 student-athletes graduate, including three with master's degrees. Along with the 25 grads from December, we totaled 123 diplomas and certifications for this academic year.
- Our student-athletes compiled a 3.471 GPA for the spring semester – the 28th consecutive semester, 14 years in a row – that we have been above 3.0. Individually, 459 Wildcats achieved a GPA of 3.0 or higher, including 136 Cats who reached 4.0 for the semester.
- Last month, the annual NCAA Academic Progress Rates were released, showing that all of UK's teams exceeded the mandated score. As an overall athletics department, our Academic Progress Rate of 991 was five points

above the national average. In addition, 14 UK teams exceeded the national averages in their sports. Eight UK teams – tying the school record – had perfect scores over the four-year evaluation period.

- Congratulations to Martin Voss of the rifle team, who earned the NCAA Elite 90 award, signifying the student-athlete with the highest grade-point average at the national championships in his or her sport. Voss has a perfect 4.0 GPA for his collegiate career.
- We also want to recognize Lauryn Borzilleri of the softball team, winner of the NCAA Jim McKay Scholarship. Only one McKay Scholarship is awarded each year, which goes to a student-athlete who plans a career in broadcasting.

Around the Horn at UK Athletics

- In April, we held the annual CATSPY Awards. A total of 31 individuals and three teams were recognized for athletic and academic accomplishments at the 24th annual celebration. Brooklyn DeLeye (volleyball), Sofia Ceccarello (rifle), Ella Emmert (softball), Teonni Key (basketball), Eva Hudson (volleyball) and Zoe Hammond (tennis) were named Miss Wildcat while Ty Bryant (football), Josh Kattus (football), Levi Sandidge (swimming) and Carlie Makarawu (track) were named Mr. Wildcat – the highest student-athlete honor at the CATSPYs.
- The 2026 class of the UK Athletics Hall of Fame was announced last week. This year's honorees include:
 - Paul Calhoun, Football 1981-84, two-year All-American
 - Tim Duckworth, Track and Field 2015-18, NCAA champion in the outdoor decathlon and indoor heptathlon
 - Leah Edmond, Volleyball 2016-19, four-year All-American
 - Patty Jo Hedges-Ward, Women's Basketball 1980-83, two-year All-SEC and gold-medal winner for the United State national team
 - Michael Kidd-Gilchrist, Men's Basketball, All-American for the 2012 national championship team Asia Seidt, Women's Swimming 2017-20, a 21-time All-American and NCAA Woman of the Year

The newest Hall of Famers will be officially inducted and honored during Hall of Fame weekend in September.

- The 2026 NFL, NBA and WNBA drafts were held, with four Wildcat football players selected, two men's basketball players drafted – including Jayden Quaintance in the first round – and a school-record four women's basketball players chosen.

- Wildcats were prominent in the recently completed NBA season, including Karl-Anthony Towns of the league champion New York Knicks. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander won the league's Most Valuable Player award for the second-straight year. Keldon Johnson was the NBA Sixth Man of the Year and Bam Adebayo received the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Trophy for community service.
- Once again, it's been a busy time in our athletics facilities and prosperous time in the city of Lexington because of the championship events held on our campus.
 - In April, we hosted the NCAA Gymnastics Regional.
 - In May, we hosted the SEC Softball Tournament.
 - That was followed by the NCAA Track and Field Regional, which brought athletes from the entire eastern half of the country to Lexington for a week of practice and competition.
- Once again, the Kentucky High School Athletic Association held state championships in our facilities in track and field, tennis, softball and baseball. During this academic year, UK Athletics played host to a total of 10 championships from the NCAA, Southeastern Conference and KHSAA.
- These events bring thousands of visitors to campus, important for our department and the University as a whole as we recruit students and athletes to UK and strengthen ties to the flagship educational institution of the Commonwealth.
- Financially, these events generate millions of dollars for the economy and tax revenues of Lexington and Central Kentucky.
- It's been said before, but it is worth repeating that these events don't happen by themselves. It takes a large number of support staff from throughout the department to make it happen. I want to recognize their work, sacrificing nights and weekends, that brings these benefits to the University and the city.
- As we have discussed many times in recent years, college athletics is searching for stability in every area of our enterprise. For decades, eligibility for student-athletes has been designated as four years of competition within a five-year period, although there have been numerous forms of waivers that extended some athletes to as many as nine years to complete their four years of eligibility. Last week, the NCAA passed a resolution, beginning with the student-athletes entering this fall, that athletes will be eligible for five years during a five-year period following graduation of their high school class. Known as "5 for 5," this will end the concept of redshirting and the pursuit of waivers to extend athletes' eligibility clocks.

Looking Ahead to the Coming Year

- On September 5, when fans stream into Kroger Field for the football season opener, they will enjoy significant savings on concessions prices. In conjunction with the new campus partner – the Compass Group – fans will see prices reduced from 25 to 50 percent on core concessions items such as hot dogs, popcorn, pretzels, nachos, chicken baskets, soft drinks and beer.
- One day later, on September 6, our volleyball team will play a match against Penn State in one of the nation's most historic sports venues – Wrigley Field in Chicago.
- Obviously, in recent years, the emergence of instant eligibility in the transfer portal has totally changed the landscape of recruiting and roster management. It's interesting to note the rankings our teams have achieved on websites that cover recruiting on a national basis. For the 2026 transfer period ...
 - Men's basketball ranked No. 2 in the nation in transfer recruiting
 - Women's basketball ranked No. 6 nationally
 - Football ranked No. 10 in the nation
- It's interesting to note that UK is the only school in the nation ranking in the top 10 in all three sports – that's a credit to the work done by our coaches, the revenue share guidance by our compliance office and other administrators and by the help of JMI Sports, which assists us in the generation of name-image-likeness financial opportunities for our athletes.