

Minutes of the University Athletics Committee  
University of Kentucky  
Thursday, September 10, 2020

The University Athletics Committee of the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees met on Thursday, September 10, 2020, via Zoom webinar.

A. Meeting Opened

Trustee David Melanson, chair of the University Athletics Committee, called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Chair Melanson asked Katie Hardwick to call the roll.

B. Roll Call

The following members of the University Athletics Committee were present: Board Members Claude A. "Skip" Berry, III, Cammie Grant, David Melanson and Rachel Webb; Community Advisory Members Vickie Bell, Wilbur Hackett and Paula Hanson; and Faculty Athletics Representative Joe Fink.

C. Chairs Report

Chair Melanson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 18, 2020, meeting. Trustee Bowen moved for approval. Trustee Webb seconded the motion and it carried without dissent.

Chair Melanson introduced President Capilouto for remarks.

D. President's Remarks

The president thanked Athletic Director Mitch Barnhart and his team for the care and concern they have extended to the student-athletes; keeping their health, safety and well-being first which the president attributed to the leadership of Athletic Director Barnhart, his coaches and staff.

The president described a recent football practice he attended and thanked the players for everything they are doing to take care of one another. The president applauded AD Barnhart and his team for being wonderful mentors to UK's student-athletes.

Chair Melanson thanked the president and introduced AD Barnhart for his report.

E. Athletic Director's Report

Athletic Director Barnhart thanked the president and Chair Melanson. "Just as it is for everyone, we are continuing to walk across a bridge, building as we go. But our first priority is the health and well-being of our student-athletes." AD Barnhart detailed the health protocols implemented in conjunction with guidelines provided by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Southeastern Conference (SEC) Medical Task Force, University of Kentucky, Center for Disease Control and Kentucky Public Health officials, and recognized those staff and health care professionals tasked with maintaining these protocols.

AD Barnhart detailed academic achievements including two SEC honor rolls released in July, with 92 Wildcats on the Spring Sports Honor Roll and 91 Cats on the SEC First-Year Honor Roll. Several teams received academic awards from their national governing bodies, including men's and women's track, gymnastics, baseball, men's and women's tennis, volleyball and swimming and diving. AD Barnhart recognized the men's golf team, which posted the highest GPA of any men's golf team in the nation, covering all divisions. "An amazing effort on their part and the first time for UK's Golf Team."

AD Barnhart continued by highlighting some exceptional student-athletes including swimming and diving athlete Asia Seidt who received the highest honor bestowed by the Southeastern Conference – the Boyd McWhorter Award as the SEC Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year. Asia has been named a finalist for the NCAA Woman of the Year, and the selection committee will announce the winner in mid-November. Additionally, AD Barnhart recognized men's basketball athlete Keion Brooks Jr. who has been appointed to the National Association of Basketball Coaches Player Development Coalition to provide student-athlete input on issues related to college basketball.

AD Barnhart continued, "Social justice continues to be at the forefront of national discussion, and we stand together in the fight for justice and equality, and against racism. During the summer, many of our teams and student-athletes began activities in this area. Athletics staff members Tiffany Hayden and Ray "Rock" Oliver have been tasked with leading a committee to address racial issues and diversity for the Athletics Department. Two actions already taken include the formation of the Black Student-Athlete Advisory Group, which began meeting this summer, and the Minority Leadership Initiative sponsored by the John McLendon Minority Scholarship Foundation. Six opportunities in the Minority Leadership Initiative – fully funded by men's basketball coach John Calipari – will be in UK Athletics under his gift. Eight UK Athletics coaches, staff members and student-athletes have been appointed to the SEC Council on Racial Equity and Social Justice. They have been meeting throughout the summer and will continue meeting in the fall.

AD Barnhart highlighted team activities over the summer. "Despite the challenges of the pandemic, many of our athletes found ways to compete this summer."

- Four men's golfers and eight women's golfers won summer tournaments or had high finishes in tournaments.
- Three baseball players earned all-star recognition in their summer leagues.
- Several of UK's former players have been able to resume action in Major League Baseball, the NBA and the NFL.
- One disappointment of the summer was that several Wildcats who had already qualified to participate in the Summer Olympics in Tokyo will have to wait until 2021 to realize their Olympic dreams.

AD Barnhart continued, "For the first time in six months, it will be great to see our athletes once again wearing the blue and white as our fall sports teams return to action in the coming weeks. The volleyball, men's and women's soccer and men's and women's cross-country teams will compete with reduced schedules this fall. Soccer and cross country begin action next week, and volleyball resumes in October. The NCAA plans to have national championship events for those sports in the spring, with details to be announced later. The men's and women's golf and tennis teams will compete with reduced schedules this fall as they prepare for their traditional spring seasons. The football team will play a 10-game SEC-only schedule, beginning September 26 at Auburn, with the home opener on October 3 versus Ole Miss."

AD Barnhart continued, “We appreciate the patience of our fans, as we know that everyone is anxious to hear plans for fan attendance, ticketing and game operations. Earlier today, we received approval from our governing bodies to proceed with fan attendance up to 20 percent of Kroger Field. Obviously, this is a major adjustment for us, and our ticket office has worked extremely hard to prepare for that. The ticket office is in the process of notifying our season ticket holders of their options for attending games this season – 12,000 seats socially distanced.” AD Barnhart recognized Commissioner Sankey and the staff at the SEC office for their efforts in helping teams return to competition. “They have worked tirelessly and methodically, always with the best interests of our student-athletes in the forefront. “

AD Barnhart concluded his report by recognizing DeWayne Peevy, who served as UK’s deputy athletic director, and is now the director of athletics at DePaul University. “DeWayne was already a well-respected leader in college athletics. His impact at UK will be felt for years to come. I am excited for him and look forward to seeing him grow the program at DePaul.” Additionally, AD Barnhart recognized two members of the Athletics’ team who retired: John Butler, who had been at UK since 1978 as an assistant baseball coach, then assistant AD for compliance; and Joe Sharpe, who came to UK in 2002, and served in various administrative posts. “John and Joe are two of the “behind the scenes” staff members who helped make our department go.”

Chair Melanson thanked Director Barnhart and asked for any questions. Trustee Bowen asked what was the likelihood of fall sports being cancelled. AD Barnhart said their plan is to play but added they have planned for disruptions and delays in case of illness. AD Barnhart stated there will be no fans in the stands for volleyball and soccer; only guests and family will be allowed to attend. Trustee Bowen thanked AD Barnhart and shared his appreciation of all the work they have done. AD Barnhart recognized Executive Associate Athletics Director Marc Hill and credited his preparations and efforts with the athletic facilities and keeping the athletes safe.

Trustee Swanson asked if any health considerations, specifically cardiovascular complications, were being monitored with the football players. AD Barnhart stated that the Southeastern Conference has established a task force that has established protocols and identifies best practices. Further the athletics department is extensively monitoring student-athletes and is following all guidelines including cardiovascular protocols established by the CDC.

Community Committee member Paula Hanson asked how the Athletics Department will handle ticket distribution. Mitch explained that the K-Fund staff and the ticket office are contacting the season ticket holders prioritized by their K-Fund points, which takes into consideration the length of time they have purchased tickets, number of tickets and any other contributions they make to the University of Kentucky. “Our goal is to give everyone who wants to come to the stadium an opportunity to attend, realizing it is not going to look the same for 2020. Hopefully after this season we can turn the page and get back to a more normal 60,000-person capacity.”

F. Other Business and Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Katie Hardwick  
University Athletics Committee Secretary