1987

UA11/2 Lady Toppers Basketball Press Releases

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WKU'S TRACI PATTON SELECTED AT NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL

Bowling Green, Ky. -- It was a long rigorous basketball season for Western Kentucky women's basketball. And now, Lady Topper Traci Patton has been selected to a berth on the South Team at the National Sports Festival in Houston, Texas.

Patton, a 6-2 junior forward, was chosen along with 11 other players (Barbara Bolden, from Huntington High School in Shreveport, La.; Ruthie and Mae Ola Bolden from Auburn; Delores Bootz from Georgia Tech; Shelia Frost, Dawn Marsh and Brigette Gordon from Tennessee; Carla Green from Georgia; Beth Hunt from Maryland; Donna Roper from Texas A&M; and Jodie Whitaker from Kentucky.)

These players were selected from more than a hundred players from Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, North and South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas at an open tryout in Jacksonville, Fla., Apr. 26.

Leading the South into action will be Joann Rutherford, the head women's basketball coach at Missouri. In 11 seasons, Rutherford's Tigers have won 240 games while losing only 105. Missouri has appeared in five consecutive NCAA national championship playoffs finishing in the top 16 in 1982. She was named Big Eight Coach-of-the-Year in 1984 and 1985. Her 1985 and 1986 squads won the Big Eight Tournament.

Patton was the only Sun Belt Conference player to be selected to any of the four (North, South, East and West) Sports Festival teams. Last season with the Lady Toppers, the Nashville native averaged 2.6 points and 2.6 rebounds in only eight minutes of play per game. From the field she was accurate on 43 percent on her shots and she hit 66 percent at the charity stripe.

- more -
"WKU's Traci Patton Selected at National Sports Festival"

The South team won the gold medal the last four years. This year they will open competition against the East on July 27 at 2:30 p.m. (CDT) in Hofheinz Pavilion on the University of Houston campus. The tournament will feature a single round robin followed by a medal round which is scheduled to conclude July 31.
Western Kentucky University
Office of Public Information • Bowling Green, KY 42101 • (502) 745-4295

EARNHARDT RETURNS TO LADY TOPPER COACHING STAFF

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Cristy Earnhardt, an assistant coach with the Western Kentucky Lady Topper basketball program from 1982-84, has returned to her former position on the Hill.

"I'm thrilled that Cristy has decided to rejoin our staff," commented WKU Head Coach Paul Sanderford, who made the announcement earlier today. "We made a good team back in '82 when we both first came to Western, and I'm looking forward to working with her again."

Earnhardt returns to campus after serving a two-year stint as head women's basketball coach at the University of Montevallo in Alabama. During her tenure with the Lady Eagle program, Earnhardt also served as a physical education instructor at the university. In a rebuilding effort, her first team there posted a 10-16 mark and then her '85-86 squad improved to win 17 of 29 games.

While with the Toppers, Earnhardt assisted Sanderford in all aspects of the program, including recruiting, scouting, academic advisement and on the floor coaching, Western compiled a 33-18 record during her two-year tenure.

"I'm excited to be working with the Lady Toppers again," Earnhardt said. "Coach Sanderford has built a great program here at Western Kentucky, and I'm looking forward to being an active part of that again."

Earnhardt has long been active in collegiate women's basketball. Prior to coming to Western in '82, she worked two years as a graduate assistant coach with the women's basketball program at Western Carolina, where she earned her master's degree in physical education. A North Carolina native, Earnhardt played her collegiate basketball at North Carolina State, where she earned a bachelor's degree in math education.

A four-year letterwinner on the Wolfpack squad, Earnhardt was a two-time collegiate All-Stater and was a finalist for the 1979 Wade Trophy, given to the Collegiate Player-of-the-Year. She continued her outstanding playing career in the now defunct WBL professional league, playing a year with the Dallas Diamonds organization.

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Athletics-Basketball, Women
LADY TOPPER BASKETBALL SCHEDULE RANKED AMONG THE NATION'S TEN TOUGHEST

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky University's Lady Topper basketball team will take on the ninth-toughest schedule in the nation in 1986-87, according to Mel Greenberg, coordinator of the Associated Press Top 20 poll.

The 1986-87 Lady Topper slate will feature the WKU women in action against 12 teams that participated in post-season play last year -- 11 in the NCAA tournament and NWIT participant Tennessee Tech (22-10). Those NCAA tourney teams are champion Texas (34-0), James Madison (27-3), Missouri (20-12), Arkansas (22-8), Middle Tennessee (20-10), Vanderbilt (22-9), Southern Illinois (25-4), Ohio University (26-3), Penn State (24-8) and Utah (21-8).

"I thought last season's schedule was difficult, but this year's is the most competitive one we've ever had at Western," commented fifth-year Head Coach Paul Sanderford, the winningest coach in Lady Topper history. "We may not end up with the same record we had last year (32-4 -- the best season in WKU history), but this schedule should definitely get us ready for post-season play."

The 30-game regular season slate features 16 home games in Western's 12,370-seat E.A. Diddle Arena, including three doubleheaders with the Hilltopper men's team. The Lady Toppers take on Utah January 17 in the opening game of the first doubleheader, then the men take on Sun Belt Conference foe Virginia Commonwealth. Later that same month, on the 29th, Sanderford's crew will face Tennessee Tech, followed by the Hilltoppers against South Florida in another SBC contest. Finally, on February 3rd, the Lady Toppers renew an old rivalry with Eastern Kentucky, while the men take on Old Dominion in another SBC showdown.

The highlight of the '86-87 schedule is a three-game tournament in Honolulu, Haw., where the Toppers will compete in the Rainbow Wahine Classic, Jan. 3-5.

The Lady Toppers officially open the season with the fourth annual Bowling Green Bank Invitational. All four teams in the '86 BGBI field (Western, James Madison, Arkansas and Missouri) posted at least 20 wins last season and participated in the NCAA Tournament. In fact, the four BGBI participants combined for an incredible 101-27 record (.789), making it the strongest field in the history of the tournament. - more -
"Lady Topper Basketball Schedule Ranked Among the Nation's Ten Toughest" / 2

"We have a great home schedule that should provide for some exciting basketball in Diddle-Arena," noted Sanderford. "Our fans will see seven teams that went on to post-season tournaments last year."

The road certainly won't be an easy one for the Toppers. They take on six '86 NCAA tournament participants in hostile territory, including a mid-season trip to Austin, Tex., to face the defending NCAA champion Lady Longhorns of Texas.

That trip will mark the second straight year that Western has taken on the defending NCAA titleholder in the regular season. Last year, the WKU women defeated defending champ Old Dominion 74-64 before a record crowd of 12,951 fans in Diddle Arena.

The '86-87 Topper schedule features a total of 34 schools, 14 of which accumulated 20-or-more victories last season. In addition to the 12 post-season tourney participants listed earlier, New Mexico State (20-8) and Harvard (20-7) both tallied 20 victories.

The latest edition Lady Topper team will be testing its skills against seven schools that have never met Western on the hardwood before.

The 1986-87 season will be the 25th in the women's sport at WKU. Through those years, the Lady Topper cagers have won 265 games and lost only 165 for a victory percentage of .620. Since Sanderford took over the coaching reins at Western, the Toppers have posted four consecutive 20-win seasons. His last three WKU teams have advanced to post-season play, placing fourth in the National Women's Invitational Tournament (NWIT) in 1984 and earning semi-finalist honors in both the 1985" and '86 NCAA championships.

"I'm really excited about the schedule we have put together," Sanderford commented. "Our schedule is definitely one of the best in the nation this year."

For ticket information on '85-'86 Lady Topper home games, contact the Western Ticket Office, E.A. Diddle Arena, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101 (Telephone: (502) 745-5222).

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<th>Time (CST)</th>
<th>Series Record</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Dec. 2</td>
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<td>at Middle Tennessee (20-10; NCAA)</td>
<td>Murfreesboro, Tenn.</td>
<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>MTSU 17-9</td>
<td>WKU 103-78**</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>WKU 85-66</td>
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<td>6-6</td>
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<td>TTU 11-7</td>
<td>WKU 83-79</td>
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<td>Tampa, Fla.</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>WKU 5-0</td>
<td>WKU 94-48**</td>
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<td>Tue</td>
<td>EASTERN KENTUCKY (8-17) (dh)</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
<td>5:15 pm</td>
<td>WKU 20-7</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>at Old Dominion (15-13)*</td>
<td>Norfolk, Va.</td>
<td>6:35 pm</td>
<td>ODU 4-3</td>
<td>WKU 74-64</td>
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<td>WKU 69-61**</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>at Virginia Commonwealth (14-14)*</td>
<td>Richmond, Va.</td>
<td>1:30 pm</td>
<td>WKU 4-0</td>
<td>WKU 101-51**</td>
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<td>Tue ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM (13-16)*</td>
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<td>WKU 83-63</td>
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<td>WKU 1995-71**</td>
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<td>WKU 16-13</td>
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<td>WKU 1998-55</td>
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<td>WKU 1985-65**</td>
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<td>WKU 1985-65**</td>
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<td>WKU 1983-69**</td>
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<td>Mar.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sun at West Virginia (12-17)</td>
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<td>Thu- at Sun Belt Conference Tournament</td>
<td>Norfolk, Va.</td>
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*Sun Belt Conference Game  **'85-'86 home game (dh) doubleheader with Toppers
Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky's Lady Topper basketball squad is ready and raring to hit the hardwood once again, as the official start of practice looms just days away (Oct. 15).

"The kids and the coaching staff are both ready to get on the floor and get down to business," commented Lady Topper Head Coach Paul Sanderford, the winningest coach in Western women's basketball history. Entering his fifth year at the Lady Topper helm, Sanderford has compiled an impressive 103-28 mark, a .790 winning percentage, and has guided the Western women to two consecutive NCAA Final Four appearances.

"I'm very pleased with our pre-season conditioning program. Coach (Steve) Small has done a great job in not only preparing the girls physically, but getting them mentally ready," Sanderford continued. "We're very aware of pre-season burnout, but Coach Small's program is unique. It helps prevent the burnout situation."

Small, in his third year with the Lady Toppers, has the pre-season preparation assignment and is widely respected for his unique conditioning program. He has readied the Lady Toppers with a regimen that has included jazzercise classes, playing touch football and super-charged weight lifting sessions.

"Physically, I know we're ready to play," noted Sanderford. "Basketball-wise, I'm not sure what to expect. We don't have proven offensive players, with the exception of Clemette Haskins, and we graduated 46 points a game," he noted. "I'm concerned about who is going to score for us."

The Toppers had little trouble putting points on the board last season. Led by Kodak All-American Lillie Mason's 20.0 per game average and scrappy Kami Thomas' 16.8 scoring mean, the Western women racked up a best-ever 32-4 record that included the NCAA East Regional Championship. However, Mason and Thomas, along with forward Annette "Cookie" Jones (6.1 ppg) and 6-2 back-up forward Sharon Ottens (2.1 ppg) have completed their eligibility.

"Our defense has got to improve in order to help us create some offense," Sanderford said. "I think we have the ingredients to be better defensively. We are bigger and we're stronger as a whole."
Western's offensive attack will be spearheaded by Haskins, a senior guard. Haskins, who has received nearly every honor in the game and is on virtually every pre-season All-America list, averaged 12.8 points per game in directing the Western offense last season. Known best for her sharp, timely passing ability, Western's career assist leader can also put the ball through the hoop.

"Clemette can shoot the ball, no doubt about that," Sanderford commented. "But, we're going to have to develop some other people to take some of the offensive pressure off of her.

"That's where the practice sessions come in," Sanderford continued. "We've got the potential. We just need to get out on the court and work hard and see what we can come up with. And, we're ready to do that. Hard work -- that's our trademark."

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Western Kentucky University
Office of Public Information • Bowling Green, KY 42101 • (502) 745-4295

PRE-SEASON POLLS PUT THE LADY TOPPERS AMONG THE NATION'S ELITE -- AGAIN

Bowling Green, Ky. — Many teams might not be too optimistic going into a new basketball season minus three starters that led the school to its best-ever record the year before -- especially when two of the players lost ranked one-two on the program's all-time scoring list.

But, such is not the case in the Western Kentucky University Lady Topper basketball camp. Fifth-year Head Coach Paul Sanderford, the winningest coach in Lady Topper history, is not only optimistic about the '86-'87 season, he's looking forward to it -- despite losing Kodak All-American Lillie Mason and standout guard Kami Thomas. And, he's got good reason for that positive outlook. His Lady Toppers are picked high in every major pre-season poll released so far this fall.

Western's Lady Toppers, coming off a 32-4 campaign that included a second consecutive trip to the NCAA Final Four, have been predicted to finish as high as eighth in two polls, and among the nation's top 15 in two other pre-season forecasts.

"I think it says a lot for our program that we are still considered to be a major contender this season, even after losing three great players from our starting lineup," commented Sanderford. "But, I think those votes of confidence are certainly justified. We've still got people on the roster that can play basketball and this team is used to winning ballgames!"

One such outstanding player on the Lady Topper roster is senior guard Clemette Haskins. The 5-10 Haskins, already WKU's all-time assist leader, has been a first-team pre-season All-America pick in every major pre-season publication. And, Lady Topper rookie Tandreia Green, a 6-0 forward from Washington, D.C., has been named to Off the Glass magazine's Freshman All-America second-team.

"We may have lost a lot of points from last year (45.0 of Western's 87.3 points per game were lost to senior graduation)," Sanderford noted, "but, Clemette and Tandreia are certainly two good players that can put the ball through the hoop. We'll put our share of points on the board."

Western ranked fifth in the nation in team offense last season.

"It's still a little early for me to predict just how we'll do this season," Sanderford continued. "But, from the few practices we've had so far, I think we are worthy of pre-season ranking. One thing's for sure, though. When that first jump ball goes up, we'll come out playing hard just as we've always done and then we'll just have to see if we can live up to all these predictions."

- Pre-season polls on back -
Pre-Season Polls Put the Lady Toppers Among the Nation’s Elite — Again

Here’s a look at the pre-season polls released thus far this year:

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<td>8. Iowa</td>
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LADY TOPPERS TO TUNE UP WITH THREE PRE-SEASON SCRIMMAGES

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky's Lady Topper basketball team will tune up for the fast-approaching 1986-87 cage season with three pre-season match-ups, including a showdown with the Mexican National team.

WKU Head Coach Paul Sanderford will first put his squad on the floor in two intra-squad "Red-White" scrimmages. The first such contest will take place at the alma mater of one of the newest members of the Western squad, when 6-0 freshman guard Tonya Wells and her Lady Topper teammates travel to Madisonville-North Hopkins High for a Nov. 14 scrimmage. Tipoff is set for 7:30 p.m. (CST). The game is sponsored by the Madisonville Junior Pro sports program and tickets are available at $2.00 for adults and $1.00 for students.

The second "Red-White" contest will take place at Oldham County High near LaGrange, Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 6:00 p.m. (CST). The event is sponsored by the Oldham County High chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. General admission tickets are available for $2.00.

After battling it out among themselves, the Lady Toppers will get a chance to see how they stack up against another team when they take on the Mexican National squad in an exhibition contest. That game will take place Sunday afternoon, Nov. 23, at Allen County-Scottsville High, alma mater of Lady Toppers Laura Ogles and Susie Starks. The game is sponsored by the Allen County Jaycees, with tipoff scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Tickets are $2.00 for adults and $1.00 for students.

The Lady Toppers officially open their season with the annual Bowling Green Bank Invitational. This year's event will take place November 29-30 in Western's E.A. Diddle Arena, and will feature one of the finest fields ever with Arkansas, James Madison and Missouri joining host Western Kentucky. The Toppers will first face Arkansas in an 8:30 p.m. contest on the 29th (following the Missouri-James Madison opener). Tickets are available at the WKU Ticket Office or through Bowling Green Bank.
FOUR OF KENTUCKY'S TOP PREP PLAYERS INK EARLY WITH THE LADY TOPPERS

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky Lady Topper Head Coach Paul Sanderford has pulled quite a recruiting coup during the national early signing period, inking four of Kentucky's top prep players -- 6-1 forward Mary Taylor of Marshall County High, 5-10 guard Nancy Crutcher of Oldham County High, 5-11 forward Stacy Payne of Mayfield and 5-6 guard Kelly Cook of Franklin-Simpson.

"I'm very pleased with our early signing efforts," Sanderford said. "We're excited that the best players in Kentucky are choosing our program."

Taylor was a first-team All-State selection as a junior last year and was selected the Region I Player-of-the-Year. She averaged 20 points and 12 rebounds per game in leading the Lady Marshals to a 28-5 record. Over the past three seasons, Marshall County has posted an impressive 92-7 win-loss mark, including a perfect 34-0 season in 1984, the year Taylor and her teammates won the state championship.

"Mary has great physical strength and uses it well," commented Marshall County High Coach Howard Beth. "She's a good offensive player and she's tough under the boards."

Crutcher is another Lady Topper signee who has tasted success in the "Sweet 16," Kentucky's high school state tournament. She led her Oldham County Lady Colonels to the state title in Western's E.A. Diddle Arena last year, picking up the tournament MVP award. The Lady Colonels finished the '86 season with a 30-6 record on the strength of Crutcher's 11-point scoring average and 48 percent accuracy rate from the field. Crutcher also averaged seven rebounds and three assists per contest. A first-team All-State selection, she is a two-time All-Region and All-District performer.

"Nancy has great work habits and dedication," said Oldham County High Coach Dave Weedman. "She sees the floor well and is a good passer, but probably what she does best is perform under pressure. She can get the points when we need them most, and that's just the mark of a competitive athlete."

An excellent athlete, Crutcher has twice won the state high school cross-country title, leading her Oldham County squad to the team title three years running.

Payne is just 200 points shy of becoming Mayfield's all-time top scorer, with 1,126 points already to her credit. She averaged 20.9 points per game last year in leading the
Lady Cardinals to a 22-5 mark. A two-time All-Region player, Payne was runner-up to fellow signee Taylor in the Region I Player-of-the-Year balloting last season. Payne is also just shy of breaking her school's career rebounding record, needing just 86 grabs to make that claim. She averaged 10.5 rebounds per contest as a junior last year.

Cook has also had playing experience on WKU's Diddle Arena floor. She and her Franklin-Simpson teammates were in the state championship contest against Crutcher and her Oldham County squad last spring. The Wildcats finished the year with a 29-6 record and a runner-up finish in the Sweet Sixteen, where Cook earned a berth on the All-Tournament team.

Cook averaged 15 points, 5.5 rebounds and three assists per contest as a junior, earning All-State honorable mention by the Associated Press. A three-time All-District performer, she has helped her Wildcat team to a combined record of 76-18 over her three years in the Blue and White.

"Kelly's strength is her quickness," commented Franklin-Simpson Coach Damon Tabor. "She's super quick and can handle the ball well. Kelly also has good leadership qualities. I think she will make an excellent backcourt player for Western."

Sanderford, the winningest coach in Lady Topper history (103-28 in four years, for a .790 success percentage), had nothing but praise for his early signees. "We've signed four of the best players in the state, no doubt about that," he said. "We'll continue to be competitive if we continue to sign the best players in Kentucky!"
LADY TOPPER PUT RECORD, RANKINGS ON THE LINE THIS WEEK

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky's Lady Topper basketball team, ranked 12th in this week's Associated Press Top 20 poll and 10th in USA Today's elite 25, will put both their undefeated (3-0) record and rankings on the line this Sunday (Dec. 7), when they host Morehead State in a 2:30 p.m. (CST) afternoon contest.

It will be the 24th meeting between the two schools in the 12-year old series and, though Western owns a 13-10 advantage, the series has been one of streaks. Morehead claimed eight straight victories, from 1978 until midway through the '81-82 season. Western beat the Lady Eagles in an overtime game that year, and the Lady Toppers have won every contest since then running up an eight-game streak.

"We have a lot of respect for Morehead," commented fifth-year Coach Paul Sanderford. "It's always a good game when these two teams get together."

The Lady Eagles of MSU are 1-1 in the early going (prior to a Dec. 5th matchup with West Virginia State College in Morehead). Leading the way for the Eagles is 5-10 sophomore guard Kelly Stamper, who has posted a two-game scoring average of 11 points and nine rebounds.

Western, the 1986 Bowling Green Bank Invitational champion, is led by All-America guard Clemette Haskins. The 5-10 senior is averaging 19 points and 8.7 assists per game. Sophomore forward Brigette Combs has also been impressive in the early going, posting averages of 13.3 points and 8.7 rebounds, the best board average on the squad.

"I'm excited about the progress our young players are making at this point in the season," Sanderford commented.

The Morehead State game will also provide another interesting twist -- the three-point rule will be in effect for the game. The Ohio Valley Conference, of which Morehead State is a member school, is one of a few leagues that is experimenting with the three-point play in women's basketball. "I don't really like the three-point rule, but we're going to experiment with it in this game and at Murray State (Feb. 26)," Sanderford noted. "I want to see how it affects our game. It will be interesting to see what happens in Diddle Arena Sunday."

Following the WKU-MSU game, the Lady Toppers return to action Wednesday (Dec. 10) when they travel to Nashville, Tenn., to renew an old rivalry with the Lady Commodores of Basketball, Women...
"Lady Topper Put Record, Rankings of the Line this Week" / 2

Vanderbilt. Western and Vandy did not meet last season, for the first time since 1977.

"We'll have our work cut out for us at Vanderbilt," Sanderford said. "They've got another good team this year. And, it may not be the only time we have to face them this year," he continued. Western could meet Vandy later in the season at the Rainbow Wahine Invitational in Hawaii. "Unfortunately, we won't see Vandy in Diddle Arena this year. We'll be glad to get back on our court this Sunday."

Sanderford's WKU teams own a 61-4 record in Western's E.A. Diddle Arena.
Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky's Lady Topper basketball team will be looking to turn things around this weekend, when it pays a visit to Carver-Hawkeye Arena to take on Iowa in a Sunday afternoon contest (Dec. 21, 1:30 p.m. CST).

The Lady Toppers, now 4-2 on the year, have dropped their last two contests, falling from 10th to 16th in the Associated Press Top 20 rankings. Western's 81-66 road loss to Vanderbilt and heart-breaking 64-63 loss to Southern Illinois in Diddle Arena last week marked only the second time since fifth-year Head Coach Paul Sanderford arrived on the Hill, that the Lady Tops have lost two in a row.

"We had a tough week last week, no doubt about that," Sanderford noted. "But, we've gone right back at it and worked hard in practice. Hopefully, we've made the adjustments we need to, and we'll be ready to take on a tough Iowa team Sunday."

The Hawkeyes of Iowa, picked as high as eighth in some pre-season polls, are also 4-2 on the year, and are ranked just below the Hilltoppers in the number seventeen slot in the AP poll. "Iowa has had a tough start, just like we have," Sanderford said. "But, they are one of the best teams in the nation right now."

Iowa's two losses came at the hands of No. 1-ranked Tennessee in the championship of the Amana-Hawkeye Classic (74-56) and at Nebraska (85-74), but Coach C. Vivian Stringer's Hawks have put together three straight wins since then. Iowa has all five starters back from last year's 22-7 team, including 5-9 junior guard Michelle Edwards, the team's leading scorer with a 15.7 average. Also posting double digit scoring averages for the Hawkeyes are pre-season All-America Lisa Becker (12.3 ppg, 6.8 rpg), a 6-4 senior center and Lisa Long (10.7 ppg, 10.2 rpg), a 5-11 senior forward.

The Hawkeyes have won 36 of their 41 games in Carver-Hawkeye Arena since Stringer's arrival in Iowa City four years ago.

Western is led by senior All-American Clemette Haskins. The 5-9 guard is averaging 19.8 points per contest, and is dishing out an average of 6.8 assists per game.

Also averaging double figures in the scoring column is sophomore forward Brigette Combs, who posts an 11.5 scoring clip and is leading the Lady Tops in the rebounding department with an average of 8.8 boards per contest.
"Lady Tops Look to Get Back on the Winning Track with Weekend Road Trip" / 2

The Iowa game marks the Lady Toppers last contest before the Christmas holidays. Western returns to action December 29th, when it hosts Ohio University in Diddle Arena for a 7:30 p.m. contest.

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LADY TOPPERS HOST POWERFUL PENN STATE SUNDAY

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky's Lady Toppers, fresh off a runner-up finish in the Rainbow Wahine Classic in Honolulu, Hawaii (Jan. 3-5), return to action in E.A. Diddle Arena this weekend, hosting powerful Penn State in a Sunday afternoon (Jan. 11, 1:30 p.m. CST) contest.

"We're excited to have the opportunity to be playing another quality Top 20 team," commented WKU Head Coach Paul Sanderford.

The 11th-ranked Lady Lions carried an 8-1 record into a Thursday night (Jan. 8) contest at West Virginia.

The Lady Toppers stand at 7-4 on the season after suffering a heart-breaking 78-75 loss to 12th-ranked Vanderbilt in the championship of the Rainbow Wahine Classic. It was Western's second loss to the Lady Commodores this season.

"The Rainbow Wahine Classic was a good learning experience for us," Sanderford noted. "Of course, the loss to Vandy was a tough one to take, but I saw some good things in our basketball team in Hawaii. We are improving," he continued. "I was especially impressed with the play of Tandreia Green."

Green, a 6-0 freshman forward from Washington, D.C., came off the bench to post double digits in the scoring column in each game; earning All-Tournament honors for her efforts. Senior All-America guard Clemette Haskins was also named to the elite eight-member All-Tourney team.

Haskins become the Lady Toppers' third all-time top scorer at the Rainbow Classic with her 14th point in the first round game against Portland State. Haskins has scored 1,496 points in the Red and White.

"The going doesn't get any easier for us, that's for sure," Sanderford said. "So, it's a good thing we made some progress at this tournament. Penn State will be a big challenge for us, but we're going to line up on Sunday afternoon and play hard for 40 minutes and see what happens. Then we'll set our sights on our next game and our next challenge."

Following the Penn State contest, the Lady Toppers return to the road, traveling to Dayton, Ohio, for a Tuesday evening (Jan. 13, 7:00 p.m. CST) game with Dayton's Lady Flyers. 

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Then, it's back home for a Diddle Arena doubleheader on Jan. 17. The Lady Toppers take on Utah (5:15 p.m. CST) in the first game and Coach Murray Arnold's Hilltoppers host Sun Belt Conference foe Virginia Commonwealth in the nightcap. The Lady Toppers then play at top-ranked Texas Jan. 21.
LADY TOPPERS HOST SHORT HOMESTAND BEFORE OPENING UP CONFERENCE PLAY

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky's Lady Toppers will take a short reprieve from the road this week, hosting three straight games in WKU's Diddle Arena before hitting the road again, when they travel to Tampa to take on South Florida in a conference opener.

Western will entertain Illinois State (Jan. 24), Tennessee State (Jan. 27) and former Ohio Valley Conference rival Tennessee Tech (Jan. 29) in Diddle Arena this week. The Tennessee Tech game will be the first of a twinbill with Coach Murray Arnold's Hilltopper squad. The Western men take on Sun Belt Conference rival South Florida in the 7:30 p.m. (CST) nightcap. The Lady Toppers take to the road again in a January 31st showdown at South Florida.

"We're glad to get back in Diddle Arena again for a couple of games before we start into our conference schedule," commented fifth-year Head Coach Paul Sanderford. "We're looking forward to playing in front of our fans, and just spending a little time in Bowling Green, Kentucky." Western has played just two of its first seven games of the year in Diddle Arena.

"We've got a tough week ahead, though," Sanderford added. "We'll have played five games in ten days when the week is through. That's a grueling schedule under any circumstances, but considering the injury situation we've had, it makes for an even tougher time."

The Lady Toppers, currently 10-5 on the year and ranked 19th by the Associated Press, have suffered through their share of bumps and bruises lately, especially at the guard position. Sophomore guard Debbie O'Connell broke her left index finger in a Jan. 3rd game in Hawaii, requiring surgery to insert a pin which is still in the finger. Then sophomore guard Susie Starks sustained a back injury in a Jan. 13 contest at Dayton, which has sidelined her for two games and left her current playing status questionable.

The Toppers roster received a big blow earlier this week, when All-America guard Clemette Haskins suffered a stretched quadricep tendon in her knee at Texas, sidelining her for the week.
LADY TOPPERS FACE BIG WEEK OF SUN BELT ACTION

Bowling Green, Ky. --- The last team in the Sun Belt Conference to start league play, opening with a road win at South Florida last week, the Western Kentucky Lady Toppers jump headfirst into conference action this week, with three SBC games on tap.

First, the Toppers take to the road for a two-game conference swing through Virginia. Western will challenge traditional power Old Dominion, the only other school to win the women's Sun Belt championship, this Friday (Feb. 6) in Norfolk. Then it's on to Richmond, Va., to face a much-improved Virginia Commonwealth team.

"This is a big weekend for us," commented fifth-year Head Coach Paul Sanderford. "Old Dominion is the best 10-9 team in the country. They played a gruesome schedule early, losing to five teams that are in the top ten, and it's paying off for them now. They're hot right now and they'll be ready to get after us."

Old Dominion knocked off 11th-ranked North Carolina State 77-63 last week, and have won four of their last five contests. Forward Donna Harrington, a 6-2 junior, leads the Lady Monarchs with averages of 14 points and nine rebounds per game. ODU is 2-0 in league play, with wins over South Florida and Virginia Commonwealth.

The Lady Rams of VCU entertain Western in a Sunday afternoon contest (11:30 a.m. CST). VCU is 13-6 on the year, 3-2 in Sun Belt action. Brenda Smith, a 5-7 senior guard, has been the guiding force behind the Rams, who finished last year's campaign with a 14-14 mark. Smith is averaging nearly 20 points per game, the third best scoring clip in the league. A two-time selection for SBC Player-of-the-Week honors thus far this season, Smith leads the league in steals, averaging nearly five swipes per contest.

Western then returns home and is back in action Tuesday, Feb. 10, entertaining Alabama at Birmingham in E.A. Diddle Arena in a 7:30 p.m. matchup. The Lady Blazers are 9-13 on the season and 1-2 in league play, with a victory over South Florida. UAB will take on Mercer on the road and South Alabama at home before coming to Bowling Green.

"I'd love to have three more conference wins under our belt come February 11th," Sanderford commented. "That tournament seeding is so important. But, that's a tall order, especially with two of those games on the road and with the schedule we've been keeping lately."

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"Lady Toppers Face Big Week of Sun Belt Action" / 2

The Lady Toppers will have played eight games in just 13 days by Feb. 11, including three on the road. And, the going won't get any easier for Sanderford and his squad, as they hit the road again for a Feb. 12 showdown with a strong Memphis State team.

Western has three players averaging double digits in the scoring department for the first time this season. All-America guard Clemette Haskins, who has returned to limited action since pulling a tendon above her left knee in a Jan. 21 game at top-ranked Texas, is averaging 14.3 points per game. After missing three games, she has played a total of 18 minutes in two contests since returning to the lineup. Senior Charlene James has stepped in and picked up the slack in Haskins' absence, and is now scoring at a 10.1 clip. Senior forward Melinda Carlson also helps the Topper effort with her 10-point scoring mean and 6.2 rebounding average.

The Western women have been shooting the ball quite a bit better as of late, breaking out of a mid-season slump with five straight games of 50%-or-better field goal shooting.

"I've said all along that we're a much better shooting team than we were showing there for a while," Sanderford noted. "We've got our confidence back and we'll need to continue shooting like we have the last five games, especially if we're going to have a chance at picking up any conference wins this week!"
LADY TOPPERS HAVE BIG PLANS FOR HOME FINALE

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky's Lady Topper basketball team will play its final home game of the '86-87 season Monday, Feb. 23, when Sun Belt Conference leader South Alabama comes to town for a 7:30 p.m. (CST) tipoff. And, in typical Lady Topper style, the Western women are planning to put on quite a show.

The Lady Toppers are looking to set a 1986-87 attendance mark, which now stands at 9,541, set in Austin, Tex., when the Lady Toppers played top-ranked Texas, Jan. 21.

Fifth-year Head Coach Paul Sanderford feels this Monday's contest has all the elements to draw a record number of fans.

"For one thing, it will be a great game Monday night," Sanderford noted. "South Alabama will come into Diddle Arena in first place in the conference with a perfect Sun Belt record and ranked 24th in the nation.

"And, Monday night will be the final home game for our six seniors," Sanderford continued. "But, another reason our fans should be in Diddle Arena Monday night is to honor Lillie Mason, Western's all-time leading scorer."

In a special halftime ceremony, Western will retire an athletic jersey for the only the second time in its history. Lillie Mason, who earned Kodak All-America honors last season as a senior on the Lady Topper squad, will have her number 32 jersey retired. Western's all-time top scorer with 2,262 career points, will join former Hilltopper All-American Jim McDaniel's (2,238 points, 1968-71) as the only athletes to receive such distinction.

"It is only fitting that Lillie's jersey be retired," Sanderford said. "She is one of the main reasons Lady Topper basketball is where it is today, and I just hope that Hilltopper fans will come out Monday night and honor this fine young lady who has done so much for our basketball program and Western Kentucky University."

Mason, a native of nearby Russellville, Ky., is traveling from Michigan to attend the game.

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"Lady Toppers Have Big Plans for Home Finale" / 2

In keeping with tradition, the pre-game ceremonies will pay tribute to the seniors on the Lady Topper squad. There are six seniors on the '86-'87 Lady Topper roster, five of which hail from within a 30-mile radius of Bowling Green!

Monday night will mark the final Diddle Arena game for Bowling Green natives Clemette Haskins, Melinda Carlson and Dana Cunningham. Also, Laura Ogles of nearby Scottsville, Ky., and Finley Baird of Russellville will play their last game on the Hill. And, senior Charlene James of Dublin, Ohio, will also be honored in the pre-game ceremonies.

"These seniors have meant a lot to Lady Topper basketball," commented Sanderford. "They have won over 100 games for Western (an average of 25 wins per year), took the Lady Toppers to two straight NCAA Final Fours and won both a Sun Belt regular season title and tournament title."

The first 1,000 people in the game will receive a special poster honoring the seniors. All Warren County elementary students, WKU faculty and staff will be admitted free Monday night. And, groups of 20 or more can purchase tickets for only 50 cents each.

The parents of all six seniors will be on hand for the ceremonies, including former Western Kentucky Coach Clem Haskins and his wife, Yvette. Coach Haskins will be court-side to watch his daughter play for the first time this season, as Clemette nears his WKU scoring mark of 1,680 career points.

"It will be an emotional night for everyone associated with Lady Topper basketball," Sanderford noted. "I hope those emotions, and a big crowd, will help us fuel up for a big win over South Alabama."

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LADY TOPPER BASKETBALL CAMP DATES SET

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky Lady Topper Head Coach Paul Sanderford has announced the dates for his sixth annual girls basketball camps, to be held on the campus of Western Kentucky University this summer.

Sanderford and his staff will conduct an individual camp for girls from age 10 to those entering high school seniors from June 21-25. The popular varsity team camp will be held from June 28-July 2.

"We're proud to be offering what we feel like is one of the best camps in the country for the sixth straight year," commented Sanderford. "Our camps have earned a reputation for both excellent teaching and for fun, and we intend to uphold that reputation."

The individual camp has grown considerably each year, but an increased staff of top-name collegiate and high school coaches and players have kept up the tradition of personalized instruction that Sanderford's camps have become known for.

The varsity team camp has become quite popular, too. Over a dozen teams from around the state and region have already made plans to attend this year's team camp, including Louisville Male High and nearby Franklin-Simpson High, both participants in this year's Kentucky Girls Sweet 16 state tournament held in Bowling Green in March.

Cost for attending the camps is just $195 for the individual camp ($150 for day campers) and $140 for the varsity team camp. Special discounts apply for early registration.

Also, for the second straight year Sanderford and his staff will conduct a special mini-camp at a state high school. This year's mini-camp is set for June 3-5 at Ballard High School in Louisville. Cost for the concentrated three-day session is just $50.
Lady Topper Basketball Camp Dates Set" / 2

For more information, contact the Lady Topper Basketball Office, E.A. Diddle Arena, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Ky. 42101; telephone: (502) 745-2133.
LADY TOPPERS SIGN PREP STAR KELLY SMITH OF STATE CHAMPION LAUREL COUNTY

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky Lady Topper Head Coach Paul Sanderford announced his second signee of the spring signing period today, with the inking of 5-9 guard Kelly Smith of Laurel County High.

Smith averaged 10 points, 7 rebounds and 7 assists per game in leading her Lady Cardinals to a 28-4 record and the 1987 state championship.

"I feel like Kelly Smith is going to be one of the premier point guards in the country before she leaves Western Kentucky," Sanderford said. "She's as ready to play as any freshman we've signed."

Smith earned All-Tournament honors at the Sweet 16, totaling 33 points, 20 rebounds and 34 assists in the four-game tourney. She was just one assist shy of the tournament record for a single game, dishing out 13 scoring passes in the championship contest against Louisville Doss. (The record of 14 was set by Laurel County's Delena House in 1977).

"I knew I wanted to go to Western all along," Smith admitted. "I fell in love with Western when I first went there to camp, and again when they hosted the Sweet 16," she continued. "I had a little success in Diddle Arena this year, I just hope I can continue to be successful there."

"Kelly is a complete ballplayer," commented Laurel County Coach Roy Bowling. "She does it all well." Kelly is a hard-working kid who plays and practices with a lot of dedication."

Smith totaled over 1,000 career points during her prep career. Her Laurel County Lady Cardinals posted an impressive 126-27 record with Smith in the starting lineup, and earned four trips to the state tournament.

An exceptional student as well, Smith was awarded the KHSAA (Kentucky State High School Athletic Association) Sweet 16 Academic Scholarship, given to the participant with the highest grade point average. She maintained a perfect 4.0 average in the classroom this year, ranking among the Top 10 in her class of 420 students. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Smith, she is interested in pursuing a business degree while at Western Kentucky.

Athletics-Basketball,Women
Smith joins USA Today's National Player-of-the-Year Terri Mann on the list of WKU spring signees. Mann, a 6-2 All-America from Point Loma High in San Diego, signed with the Lady Toppers April 18.

The Lady Topper coaching staff signed four other outstanding Kentucky prep stars during the November signing period -- 6-1 forward Mary Taylor, Kentucky's "Miss Basketball," of Marshall County, 5-10 guard Nancy Crutcher of Oldham County, 5-11 forward Stacy Payne of Mayfield and 5-6 guard Kelly Cook of Franklin-Simpson.
LADY TOPPERS TRYING OUT FOR SPOTS ON NATIONAL AMATEUR TEAMS

Bowling Green, Ky. -- There's always "hoops on the Hill" at Western Kentucky University, even in the "off-season." In fact, several Lady Topper basketball players have been spending quite a bit of time in E.A. Diddle Arena lately, preparing for the upcoming tryouts of the USA National Team and the Olympic Festival.

Freshman forward Tandreia Green is headed for Colorado Springs, Colorado, site of the Olympic Training Center, this week to participate in the tryouts for the USA National Team. The three-day tryouts will be conducted Apr. 23-26.

The USA National Team will represent the country in the World University Games and the Pan American Games.

Freshman center Michelle Clark and sophomores Brigette Combs and Debbie O'Connell are hard at work readying themselves for the Olympic Festival tryouts, scheduled for May 1-3 at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. The three will be vying for a spot on the South team.

Last year, junior center Traci Patton was a member of the South Team that went on to earn a gold medal at the Olympic Festival.

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LADY TOPPER SIGNEE TERRI MANN EARN BERTH ON WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES TEAM

Bowling Green, Ky. -- Western Kentucky University signee Terri Mann, a 6-2 All-America forward from San Diego, Calif., has been named to the World University Games team.

Mann, who inked with the Lady Toppers Apr. 18, was chosen from over 150 players who tried out this past weekend (Apr. 23-26) at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. The World University Games will be held July 8-19 in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. The USA women's basketball team will be coached by University of Southern California Coach Linda Sharp.

Mann, who prepped at San Diego's Point Loma High, is one of only a few high school seniors ever to have earned a spot on the USA National Team. Mann was recently named USA Today's Player-of-the-Year.

Western's Tandreia Green, a freshman forward, was also at the tryouts, but was not selected for the team.

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Three Lady Toppers will be vying for a spot on the Olympic Festival's South Team this weekend (May 1-3). Freshman center Michelle Clark and sophomores Brigette Combs (forward) and Debbie O'Connell (guard) will participate in the tryouts to be held at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas.

Last year, junior Traci Patton was a member of the South Team that went on to earn a gold medal at the Olympic Festival.
HASKINS, TAYLOR EARN KENTUCKY ATHLETE-OF-THE-YEAR HONORS

Bowling Green, Ky. --- Western Kentucky's senior All-America guard Clemette Haskins and Lady Topper signee Mary Taylor have been recognized as the state's top 1986-87 collegiate and high school athletes in the team sport division by the Kentucky Citizens for Sports Equity organization.

Haskins, a 5-11 superstar who holds every WKU assist record, and Taylor, a 6-1 frontliner from Marshall County High who signed with the Toppers in the fall, were honored at the organization's Women's Sports Leadership Conference held in Richmond, Ky., this past weekend (May 2).

"It's an honor to have two athletes associated with our program receive such recognition," commented Lady Topper Head Coach Paul Sanderford. "Both are certainly deserving."

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And, a former member of the WKU family received distinction at the conference. Lois Holmes, a WKU alumnus and former Lady Topper graduate assistant coach under former coach Julia Yeater, was named Kentucky's Official-of-the-Year. Holmes officiated the Girls Sweet 16 tournament held in WKU's Diddle Arena in March.

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LADY TOPPERS WRAP UP RECRUITING EFFORTS WITH THE SIGNING OF JUCO GUARD

Bowling Green, Ky. — Western Kentucky's Lady Topper basketball staff has wrapped up its recruiting efforts for the '87-'88 season with the inking of its seventh and final signee, junior college standout Wendy Milner.

Milner, a 5-11 swing guard from Western Texas College, led her Lady Dusters through an impressive 31-5 campaign that saw them finish fourth in the National JuCo Championships this season. She averaged 11.9 points and 5.8 rebounds per outing, on the strength of 53 percent field goal shooting and a 71 percent accuracy rate from the free throw line.

"Wendy gives us that big two-guard with great athletic ability," commented Lady Topper Head Coach Paul Sanderford. "Plus, the fact that she played for Western Texas coach Kelly Chadwick, one of the top junior college coaches in the country, is a big extra for our program. Wendy should have no problem making the adjustment from junior college ball to the Division I level. She'll be ready to play."

"Wendy is a great athlete who can certainly shoot the ball," Chadwick commented. "She knows when to shoot the ball, too. And, she's an unselfish team player. I had five of my players from this year's team sign with Division I programs, including an All-American, and I feel Wendy has more potential to do well in Division I than any of them."

Milner prepped at South High in her hometown of Columbus, Ohio. An excellent student as well, she posted a 3.0 grade point average at Western Texas and plans to study math education at Western.

Milner joins two other spring signees on the list of Western recruits, 5-9 All-State guard Kelly Smith of state champion Laurel County High, and USA Today's National Player-of-the-Year, 6-2 All-American Terri Mann.

The Lady Topper coaching staff signed four other outstanding Kentucky prep stars during the November signing period — 6-1 forward Mary Taylor, Kentucky's "Miss Basketball," of Marshall County; 5-10 guard Nancy Crutcher of Oldham County; 5-11 forward Stacy Payne of Mayfield; and 5-6 guard Kelly Cook of Franklin-Simpson.