1982

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University Information

Location: Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101
Affiliation: NCAA I-AA Independent
Nickname: Hilltoppers
Colors: Red and White
President: Dr. James L. Zardari
Enrollment: 13,000
Chairman, University Athletic Committee: Dr. John D. Mann
Athletic Director: John Oldham
Head Football Coach: Jimmy Feix
Assistant Head Coach: Butch Gilbert
Defensive Coordinator: Bill Hope
Defensive Line: Clarence "Stumpy" Baker
Quarterbacks: Receivers: Sam Clark
Defensive Backfield: Larry Walker
Trainer: Dave M. Smith
Assistant Trainers: Bill Edwards, Renee Bethune
Football Office Phone: Area 502 745-2984
Athletic Office Phone: Area 502 745-3642

For Information on All Sports—Sports Information Director: Paul JUST
Office Phone: 502 745-4295
Home Phone: 502 781-4652

1982 Hilltopper Football

Coach Jimmy Feix

The 1982 season will be Jimmy Feix’s 15th as head coach of the Hilltoppers, but his name has been closely connected with winning football at Western Kentucky for much longer than that. His association with Western got its first indication in 1949, when he, along with his Hilltoppers, was hired by the Ohio Valley Conference to help with the Ohio Valley Conference championship and added a 17-8 win to its 8-2-0 record. At the same time, Feix was earning Little All-America honors for himself. When his college playing days were over, the 1968s Gators of the National Football League drafted him and he was impressive in pre-season drills, but a serious injury early that fall ended his pro career.

Feix returned to Western in 1957 after four years in the U.S. Air Force. He served as a graduate assistant that first year while completing the requirements for the Master’s degree, then became a full-time assistant under former Hilltopper Head Coach Nick Denes the following season. Feix was named head coach in December, 1967, when Denes retired from coaching. In 1968, his “rookie” season as head coach, Feix led Western to seven wins against only two losses and a tie with nationally ranked and bowl-bound Akron. In 14 seasons, his Hilltoppers have won or shared the coveted league championship six times, in 1970, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1978 and 1980. His 1982 team will be the first in the past 34 years to compete as an independent, WKU withdrew from the OVC in May to join the Sun Belt Conference, which does not sponsor a football championship.

Feix’s 1973 team was the first undefeated, untied team in Western history, finishing the regular season with a perfect 10-0 record while leading the nation’s Division II teams in scoring at 37.7 points per game. The 73 Hilltoppers then entered the first-ever NCAA Division II national championship playoffs and finished second, winning the season with an overall 12-1-0 record. Western went to the NCAA playoffs again in 1975 and again finished as the No. 2 team in the nation, finishing 11-2-0.

He led his 1978 squad from an injury-riddled 1977 campaign when the Hilltoppers fell 1-8-1 and last place in the conference to an 8-2-0 mark and the OVC crown. The Western comeback was the most impressive turnaround performance in the nation in 1973.

Feix was named Kodak College Division Coach of the-Year Division Four in both 1973 and 1975. He also won Ohio Valley Coach of the Year honors and was honored similarly by the Louisville Courier-Journal and Inside Kentucky Sports magazine. He also began his career in 1978 and 1980.

One of the most successful and respected mentors in the game, Feix goes into the 1983 campaigns with a career coaching record of 98 wins against only 43 losses and 2 ties, for a winning percentage of 69%. His 15 Hilltopper teams have won 67, lost 28 and tied in 2 Ohio Valley Conference competition, a 701 percentage.

A frequent lecturer at football clinics, Feix has been a primary influence in the organization and continuation of the activities of Western’s chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

OVC Players of the Year

Defensive Line
- 1963 Nick Dones
- 1973 Jimmy Feix

Offense
- 1963 Dickie Moore

1963 Coach of the Year
- Nick Denes

1973 Coach of the Year
- Jimmy Feix

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With 16 starters back in uniform, Coach Jimmy Feix is looking for his 1982 Western Kentucky University football team to have an experienced nucleus around which to build a winner in the first campaign as an independent since 1963.

Western, 6-5 overall on the gridiron in '81 (and 4-4 in its last drive for an Ohio Valley Conference title), has joined the Sun Belt Conference, which does not sponsor a football championship, and will now have to rely on its position in the NCAA Division I-AA poll to earn a post-season playoff berth.

It's a challenge, said veteran Hilltopper Head Coach Jimmy Feix, who begins his 15th season at the WKU helm. "In a manner of speaking we're playing a ‘conference’ game every time we go on the field. We've put together a tremendous squad for 1982," he added. "In fact, with nine good AA teams and a strong-A school, we probably have one of the toughest schedules in all of Division I-AA.

The Hilltoppers travel to conference (AA) Delaware and Murray State during the course of the 1982 campaign and host arch-rival, the AA national runner-up Eastern Kentucky in the fall. Louisville is expected to be one its best teams in years and Delaware, Murray St, and Eastern are legitimate I-AA powerhouses. The remainder of the always-tough OVC round out the slate.

Western does have a lot of talent back. However, to be up to the challenge, Coach Feix and his staff will need to adequately fill key vacancies, including these left by the graduation of a pair of All-Americans — defensive ends DonnieEvans and T. Smith.

Listing a total of outstanding returnees are All-OVC standouts Paul Gray (who led the conference in tackles), and John Newby (who led his teammates in total tackles (173) and was second in tackles for loss (20 for 83 yards). But, this time around, almost everyone is expected to battle for a chance to start.