2016

UA19/16/2 Athletic Media Relations Press Releases

WKU Athletic Media Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 6, 2016
WKU ATHLETICS / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

New WKU wordmark and select Hilltopper/Lady Topper wordmarks available for download HERE. WKU’s new primary athletics wordmark is also attached.

HILLTOPPER ATHLETICS LAUNCHES NEW WKUSPORTS.COM AND ATHLETIC WORDMARKS

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – In conjunction with multimedia partner CBS, WKU Athletics launched an updated WKUSports.com as well as released new Hilltopper, Lady Topper and WKU wordmarks on Wednesday.

The new wordmarks will live alongside the world famous Red Towel, which remains WKU’s primary athletic mark. WKU’s new wordmarks are a part of WKU’s mission in 2016-17 to “Respect the past. Defend the present. Own the future.”

The updated wordmarks replace existing wordmarks with a sleeker, more refined look. They represent a natural evolution as WKU moves forward following its historic first two seasons in Conference USA, which have included a league-high 14 conference championships – double the next closest league school.

How to Follow the Hilltoppers: For complete information on WKU Hilltopper athletics, follow the program via social media @WKUSports on Twitter and on Facebook at facebook.com/WKUathletics.
WKU SETS NEW COMMUNITY SERVICE BENCHMARK FOR 2015-16

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU Athletics not only excelled on the field in 2015-16, with five conference titles and a bowl championship, but it also set new a benchmark off the field through the Hilltoppers with Heart community service program.

Hilltoppers with Heart is designed to give WKU student-athletes, coaches and staff the unique opportunity to make an impact in their community by volunteering their time and talent with numerous organizations. After contributing over 2,000 hours of service in the community in 2014-15, WKU Athletics set the new benchmark for the program in 2015-16 by eclipsing the 3,000 hour mark. Since its inception, the community outreach initiative has now contributed over 9,000 hours of community service.

"A primary goal of WKU Athletics is to have a positive impact in our community by making a meaningful contribution in every way possible," said Director of Athletics Todd Stewart. “There is no greater endeavor than giving your time to benefit others. We are all fortunate to be a part of a great south central Kentucky community, and I commend our athletes, coaches and administration for their dedication to helping our region.”

Recent volunteer efforts WKU student-athletes and coaches have participated in include the One Shirt, One Body and the Day of Caring campaigns.

One Shirt, One Body is an NCAA wide event created by student-athletes at Notre Dame dedicated to uniting student-athletes and the community by donating gently used clothing items to those in need, specifically through athletic gear.

Boxes were set out in all the team’s locker rooms for players to donate their gently used apparel. The donations were collected and WKU athletes from football, women’s basketball, women’s golf and volleyball handed out the donation to the local kids.

2015-16 marked the fifth year WKU staff and athletes participated in the Day of Caring, a program designed to partner with local non-profit organizations to complete more than 70 projects across the region.

Other notable Hilltoppers with Heart volunteering efforts for the 2015-16 academic year include volleyball’s continued strong participation with the Hope For Harlie foundation, softball’s Big Red Readers initiative and football’s involvement in the Feeding South Florida campaign.

Passport Health Plan, founded in 2011, is the presenting sponsor of Hilltoppers with Heart. Passport Health Plan is designed to give WKU student-athletes, coaches and staff the unique opportunity to make an impact in the community by volunteering time and talent with numerous organizations including The United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, local schools and many more. Passport Health Plan is a provider-sponsored, non-profit, community-based Medicaid health plan that has been contracted with Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services to administer Medicaid benefits since 1997. Medicaid members
can choose Passport to be their health care provider, and as of June 30, 2014, there are more than 6,300 Passport members living in Region 4, which includes Warren County and the campus of Western Kentucky University.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 13, 2016

WKU SPORTS MEDICINE STAFF ADDS DR. TAD SEIFERT

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU Athletics announced the addition of Dr. Tad Seifert to its Sports Medicine Staff on Wednesday, where he will serve as a Team Physician for all Hilltopper sports.

He has over 10 years of experience in the field and has been a consulting neurologist over the past three years. Dr. Seifert will also continue to serve at the Norton Neuroscience Institute in Louisville, Kentucky as the director of the Sports Concussion Program. He has also worked as a Neurohospitalist since arriving at the Norton Neuroscience Institute in 2009, which includes a stint as a clinical assistant professor at the University of Kentucky for two years.

A member of the Commonwealth Neurological Society, Dr. Seifert received his bachelor’s degree from Oklahoma State University in 1996 and his doctorate of medicine from the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine in 2000. He spent his residency at the University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center before eventually moving to the Commonwealth.

“We are excited and extremely happy that Dr. Seifert has officially joined our team physician group,” WKU Director of Sports Medicine Dr. Bill Edwards added. “He will be a great addition to our staff of medical professionals.”
IRVING, Texas — WKU student-athletes Kendall Noble and Ellinor Haag have been named recipients of Conference USA 2015-16 Scholar Athlete of the Year awards, as announced Tuesday by the league office.

C-USA Scholar Athlete of the Year awards are presented to the top student-athletes in each conference-sponsored sport, determined by a vote of the league’s 14 Faculty Athletics Representatives. The award is based on academic achievement (GPA), athletic achievement and service.

Award recipients were selected from C-USA’s full-time and affiliate institutions in 19 sports (combining indoor and outdoor track and field). WKU was one of six league members with multiple representatives.

Noble, a redshirt junior guard for Lady Topper Basketball in 2015-16, became just the fourth player in C-USA history to sweep both the Player and Defensive Player of the Year awards. She averaged 18.1 points, 7.7 rebounds and 5.6 assists for the Lady Toppers this season as the team reached the quarterfinals of the WNIT, its deepest postseason run since the 2006-07 campaign.

The Hazard, Ky., native recorded the first two triple-doubles in WKU's storied history, notching 17 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists against Charlotte on Jan. 23 and repeating the feat with 17 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists against Marshall in the C-USA Quarterfinals on March 10. The latter was the first triple-double in the history of the C-USA Tournament, and Noble was the lone Division I player in the nation with a pair of triple-doubles this season.

In addition to her on-court prowess, Noble excelled in the classroom and earned her undergraduate degree in May. She captured a spot on the C-USA All-Academic Team and became WKU's first CoSIDA Academic All-American since 1981.

Noble was WKU's recipient of the C-USA Winter Spirit of Service Award that recognizes an athlete from each member university for their qualities in competition, in the classroom and in service for the community.

Haag, a Lady Topper Golf senior, also excelled in the classroom with a 3.97 GPA as an international business major. She was a two-time member of the C-USA All-Academic Team and a recipient of the C-USA Commissioner’s Academic Medal.

Haag led the Lady Toppers to a fourth-place team finish at the 2016 C-USA Women’s Golf Championship, their best result in a conference tournament since 1997. She became WKU's top conference championship individual finisher since Crystal Anglea in 2000 after tallying a 7-over
223 (81-70-72) to finish ninth. She finished the season with a 75.0 stroke average and brought home nine top-20 finishes in 11 opportunities.
Good afternoon,

In 2015-16, WKU again led Conference USA in conference championships (six), and for the first time ever, all sport programs achieved an Academic Progress Rate (APR) score of 950 or higher.

At the conclusion of each season, Director of Athletics Todd Stewart releases his annual report on the state of the program. That video can been seen below.

https://youtu.be/2h3ROxXpscl

Thanks,
Kyle
WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / Aug. 2, 2016
WKU Athletics / Contact: Zach Greenwell, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Dropbox link to Day of Caring photos:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/lgh8tk2o64ryxm9/AABdZDqR9GiEJUFl59a1zqi4a?dl=0

WKU VOLUNTEERS LEND HAND TO UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Athletics once again participated in the United Way Day of Caring on July 27, lending about 120 volunteers to four projects in the area. Hilltopper volunteers pitched in on projects at Warren East High School, Briarwood Elementary and Bowling Green Christian Academy. Their efforts included helping lay mulch and clean up playgrounds, painting interior walls and moving equipment.

Day of Caring, which is a program designed to partner with local non-profit organizations to complete numerous projects across the region, has been taking place since 2009. This is the sixth straight year WKU has participated in Day of Caring as part of Hilltoppers With Heart, presented by Passport Health Plan.

This year, in honor of its 60th anniversary, United Way of Southern Kentucky is building upon its original concept with the introduction of 60 Days of Caring — a period starting July 18 and ending on Sept. 15 with a 60th anniversary community celebration.

During these 60 days, United Way is encouraging community members to do something to show that they care about our community. WKU took part in the first phrase of community impact, which was education.

Hilltoppers With Heart, sponsored by Passport Health Plan, was founded in 2011 and is designed to give WKU student-athletes, coaches and staff the unique opportunity to make an impact in the community by volunteering time and talent with numerous organizations including United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, local schools and many more.

WKU Athletics set a new benchmark for the program in 2015-16 with more than 3,000 hours of service to the community. Since its inception, the community outreach initiative has contributed more than 9,000 hours of community service.

Passport Health Plan is a provider-sponsored, non-profit, community-based Medicaid health plan that has been contracted with Kentucky’s Cabinet for Health and Family Services to administer Medicaid benefits since 1997. Medicaid members can choose Passport to be their health care provider, and as of June 27, 2016, there are nearly 17,000 Passport members living in Region 4, which includes Warren County and the campus of Western Kentucky University.
WKU's Co-ed and All-Girl squads racked up awards at the Universal Cheerleaders Association College Cheerleading Camp hosted by East Tennessee State University from July 28 through July 31.

WKU’s All-Girl team brought home first-place trophies in Cheer and Overall Game Day Performance, while placing second in the Fight Song category and third in for Sideline Performance.

They also received the award of “Most Collegiate” in their division, which is based upon traditional game day appearance, positive team conduct and supportive behavior of other teams attending the camp.

The Hilltoppers’ Co-ed squad received second place in the D1A Co-ed Fight Song division defeating teams from the University of Mississippi and the University of Kentucky. They earned third place in Sideline and fourth place in Cheer, respectively.

They were also awarded the “Leadership Award,” which is the only award voted on from the other universities in the division.

Different university cheerleading teams travel each year to camps across the United States to learn new material and improve upon their crowd leading skills before the season begins.
WKU TO INDUCT FOUR HILLTOPPER GREATS INTO W-CLUB HALL OF FAME ON HOMECOMING WEEKEND

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Four great names in the history of Western Kentucky University Athletics will be inducted as the 26th class into the WKU Athletic Hall of Fame in ceremonies set for Homecoming Weekend this fall.

The 2016 class includes Buster Ashley (football), Sharon Lee Miller (football), Tiffany Porter-Talbert (women’s basketball) and Mike Wells (men’s basketball).

The induction of the 2016 class brings the number of former WKU athletes and coaches to earn berths in the school’s Athletic Hall of Fame to 146 since its founding in 1991.

The 2016 class will be inducted in a ceremony highlighting the annual W-Club Homecoming Brunch, set for 10:30 a.m. (CDT), Saturday, Oct. 22, on the main floor (The John Oldham Court) in E.A. Diddle Arena on the WKU campus in Bowling Green.

Tickets for the event, which is open to the general public, are $15 each and can be purchased and/or reserved:
• online at alumni.wku.edu/wclubbrunch16 (then click on the “Registration” box and fill out the reservation form)
• by calling 1-888-WKU-ALUM (1-888-958-2586) or, locally in the Bowling Green area, 270-745-4395;
• or, by contacting either W-Club Treasurer Bill Edwards (270-745-6026; bill.edwards@wku.edu) or W-Club Secretary Paul Just (270-792-4247; paul.just@wku.edu).

Each W-Club member who has paid his/her 2016-17 dues may claim two complimentary tickets to the event; however, seating is limited and reservations MUST be made — either online, by phone with the Alumni Association, or with Edwards or Just — to ensure seating is available. Non-members, and the general public, are welcome, but must purchase tickets (see above). Letterwinners who have not yet paid their ‘16-17 dues may do so online via credit card (at alumni.wku.edu/joinwclub) or at the door with a prior reservation.

The inductees will also be honored in ceremonies on Jimmy Feix Field at halftime of the annual Homecoming Football Game, set to kickoff at 6 p.m. Head Coach Jeff Brohm will pit his Hilltoppers against Conference USA foe Old Dominion at Houchens Industries - L.T. Smith Stadium. Tickets for the game are available by calling 1-800-5-BIG-RED (or 270-745-5222). A reminder: W-Club members with a valid 2016-17 membership card may claim one complementary ticket to the football game.
BUSTER ASHLEY (Football, 4 letters, 2001-04)

A three-time All-America offensive lineman and a consensus honoree as a senior in 2004, Buster Ashley was named to either first (12 times) or second-team (6 times) All-America teams 18 times in his last three seasons by eight different selection organizations. He was an Associated Press first team pick both his junior and senior seasons (and a second-team pick as a sophomore); the Kodak/AFCA first team each of his last two years; and, the Walter Camp Foundation as a senior. Ashley was an All-Gateway Football Conference (GFC) selection all 4 years — first team his last three seasons after landing on the second team as a freshman. He anchored some of the greatest offensive line units in school history — including three of the top 11 scoring teams in WKU history at the time. Those clubs averaged better than 385 total yards per game. That included the NCAA I-AA national championship team in 2002. His Topper teams won 38 of 52 games (73.1%) and went 22-6 (78.6%) in GFC action, winning the league title in ‘02, finishing second in both ‘01 and ‘04 and placing third in ‘03. All four of those Topper teams earned berths in the NCAA I-AA playoffs. He was co-captain of the 2004 Hilltoppers. Ashley is a teacher and coach in his hometown, Owensboro, Ky.

SHARON LEE MILLER (Football, 4 letters, 1961-64; Track, 1 letter, 1962)

Sharon Lee Miller came to The Hill in the fall of 1961 and went on to play a key role in the only undefeated season in the history of Hilltopper football. He quarterbacked Coach Nick Denes’ 1963 Toppers to a 10-0-1 campaign and the championship of college division football’s top bowl game, the Tangerine Bowl (now the Capital One Citrus Bowl). The ‘63 Hilltoppers rolled over their Ohio Valley Conference foes by an average of three touchdowns a game, running through the league with a perfect 7-0 record, becoming the first team in conference history to win seven league contests. Then, capping off the season, the Toppers shut out the Coast Guard Academy 27-0 in the Tangerine Bowl. For his efforts in that contest, Miller was named the game’s MVP. Miller led the OVC in scoring that season, taking advantage of his running skills to tally 60 points on 10 TDs. He was honored as the team’s Most Valuable Offensive Back in both 1963 and ‘64. He set a school record for season rushing yards by a quarterback (429 on 81 carries) in 1963 that stood for nearly three decades. A retired high school administrator, teacher, coach and real estate developer, he resides in Georgetown, Ind., with his wife Brenda (Haynes), a former Topper cheerleader.
TIFFANY PORTER-TALBERT (Women’s Basketball, 4 letters, 2003-06)

The 2005 Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year, Tiffany Porter-Talbert was just the second player in Lady Topper history to score 2,000 points, totaling 2,028 in 127 career games, and remains one of just three Toppers to reach that milestone. A three-time All-SBC pick (a feat equaled by only eight Lady Toppers), she won Freshman All-America and SBC rookie of the year honors in 2003. The only Lady Topper to win a berth on the SBC All-Tournament Team four times, she totaled 995 rebounds and posted 28 career double-doubles, both still records for a Topper guard. The 583 points she scored in ‘03-04 was a school standard for a sophomore (still 3rd on that list), when she led WKU in both scoring (17.1 ppg) and rebounding (8.5 rpg). Her 4,136 minutes played remains a WKU standard; and, she still ranks second in career steals (257). Porter-Talbert, who made 795 of a school record 1,606 field goals attempted (49.5%), played on four 20-win teams that won four SBC East Division titles, one league tourney crown and made four post-season tourney appearances — one in the NCAA and three in the WNIT, reaching the quarter-finals in ‘04 and the semi-finals in ‘06. Her WKU teams won 89 of 129 games (69%) and were 46-10 (82.1%) in SBC regular season play. She also lettered in track and was a member of the Lady Toppers’ first 4x100 relay team to qualify for the NCAA Championships. She was WKU’s John O. Oldham Female Athlete of the Year in ‘04. Porter-Talbert calls Henderson, Nev., home and continues to play pro basketball in Europe.

MIKE WELLS (Men’s Basketball, 4 letters, 2001-04)

Mike Wells was a key member of early 2000s teams that won three Sun Belt regular season and tournament championships and made appearances in three NCAA tournaments. An Associated Press All-American as a senior, Wells was a two-time All-Sun Belt Conference selection, the league’s Player of the Year as a senior in 2004, and the conference Defensive Player of the Year — a first for a guard — both his junior and senior seasons. He completed his career on The Hill with 1,245 points to rank 20th among all Hilltoppers at the time (and still in the Top 25 on that list). He still ranks in the Top 10 in three-pointers made (177) and attempted (492) along with free throw percentage (79.7%) and blocked shots (92 — he is one of just two guards on that list). Wells led his Toppers in blocks both his junior (47) and senior (22) seasons; and, he also led the team in steals (41) as a senior. A three-year starter, he helped the Toppers win 91 of 123 games (73.9%) overall and 47 of 58 contests (81%) in SBC regular season action. And, he was one of three Hilltoppers named to the 2003 SBC All-Tournament Team. Wells resides in Bowling Green, Ky.
Men’s Basketball

On how ticket sales are going for men’s basketball...
“Great. And we actually, I thank our fans for this, sold close to 400 new season tickets before we released the schedule. So that was a pretty good indication.”

On how coach Stansbury has adjusted to WKU...
“Well, great. During the interview process we really talked about four primary areas – recruiting and roster, energy, scheduling, and winning. And the areas that he has been able to address so far, he’s done everything that he said he would do. I think he’s knocked it out of the park.”

On some of the challenges when it came to scheduling...
“Well the lateness when he came aboard. You know, a lot of it was already in place, not all of it but a lot of it was. I give him a lot of credit there because he really is truly committed to improving our schedule, particularly with the games we can control with nonconference games. He actually, and I’m glad that it turned out the way it did, went against my advice. We were close to getting the schedule done, we only needed one more game and that’s what held it up the last couple weeks. I suggested that we play a non-DI just to get it done and get it out, but he did not want to do that. So we held on for a little bit and he was able to work something out for Saint Mary’s. I don’t think there are a lot of first-year coaches that would take on an away game of that magnitude in their first year – especially when they weren’t forced to do so. But he did knowing that they would come back here in two years. I know that two years seems like a long time, but two years from now we’ll have nonconference home games with both Saint Mary’s and Wisconsin. And that’s what we are really trying to build for having those type of nonconference teams coming to Diddle Arena.”

Women’s Basketball

On the very high expectations going into the season...
“Well, I think no doubt based on what’s been done and really what is coming back. Having Jaycee (Coe) and Kyvin (Goodin-Rogers) here last year with sitting out and knowing the system will make them ready to go. I think what Michelle (Clark-Heard) has built is truly special. When she was hired, and I just talked about what Rick (Stansbury) inherited with some major challenges, what she inherited when you go back was us coming off an all-time program record of 21 losses. And her first roster had two juniors and no seniors, and she has gone about it the right way. I believe the four years she has been here the 103 wins is the most over that period since the early 1990s and the 57 wins over the last two years is the best two-year stretch in program history. So what she has accomplished in four years is remarkable and I think it has led to where we are right now. Having high expectations is a good thing, you don’t have high expectations unless you have success and people are excited about it. We have those two things right now and it should be a very special year for the Lady Toppers.”

On how the deep run in the WNIT will translate to this year’s momentum...
“I think it helps when you have any success in postseason play because when you go into those one-and-done situations, that’s different. I don’t care how big a regular season game is, when you go into a game knowing if you lose that the season is over, that’s just a different mentality. So to really win three of those games, two of them on the road, I think it speaks very highly of how well that team jelled at the end of the year.”

**On the nonconference slate...**

“Well I think Michelle (Clark-Heard) has done a very good job there. We have Indiana coming here, we had Louisville come in here last year. It’s a little bit like football, when you have success it becomes more difficult to schedule games. Coaches of other teams are a little more reluctant. It was easier to schedule games when we weren’t good, but when you’re good it becomes a little harder.”
HILLTOPPER ATHLETICS PIONEER BETTY LANGLEY PASSES AWAY AT 91

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Betty Langley, a pioneer in the development of varsity athletics for women at Western Kentucky University, passed away Wednesday, Sept. 28. She was 91 years old.

Funeral arrangements have been made with J.C. Kirby Funeral Home on Broadway Ave., on Tuesday. Visitation will be held from 2 – 3 p.m., and the funeral will be held immediately after at 3 p.m.

Ms. Langley, a member of the faculty in the Department of Physical Education, played a pivotal role in the creation of the women’s intercollegiate sports program on The Hill in the early 1970s. In the spring of 1973, she took two golfers to represent WKU in an collegiate tournament in New England. Afterward, her colleague, Dr. Shirley Laney, took charge of the women’s golf team, while Langley concentrated her efforts with women’s tennis.

She coached the Lady Topper netters from 1973 thru the fall season in 1980. Her teams posted an overall record of 75-32 (70.1%) and won five conference championships — two in the Kentucky Women’s Intercollegiate Conference (1975-76 and ’77-78) and three in the Ohio Valley Conference (1977, ’78 and ’79 — the first three years the sport was sponsored by the OVC). Langley was the first to be honored as the OVC coach of the year in the women’s sport in 1978 and she repeated in ’79. Her 1975-76 club was a near-perfect 14-1 and her teams enjoyed a five-year (1974-75 thru ’78-79) run amassing 62 victories against only 13 setbacks, an 82.7% success ratio.

In 1948, Langley began her 33-year career at WKU at the old College High School on campus, organizing a girls’ physical education program there. Then, in 1961, she joined the University faculty. Through the years, she was instrumental in working with the P.E. majors club and with the development of intramural sports for women. She was also involved in various professional organizations while watching WKU progress from a small teachers college into a major state university.

Langley also played an important role in helping develop Kentucky’s high school women’s tennis championship. She was co-director of the first high school women’s tennis championship tournament and directed the high school regional for several.

A native of Centertown, Ky., she came to WKU from Madisonville (Ky.) High School in 1943 and graduated with a B.S. in P.E. in 1947. She added a master of arts degree in education from WKU in 1952. Langley retired in 1982.
SMITH STADIUM STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING CENTER RE-NAMED IN HONOR OF TIM AND SARAH FORD

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU’s strength and conditioning center received a new name on Thursday in honor of former football letterman and 1999 W-Club Hall of Famer Tim and wife Sarah Ford and will now be known as the Tim and Sarah Ford Strength and Conditioning Center.

Ford, a native of Louisville, Ky., earned his bachelor’s degree from WKU’s Ogden College of Science and Engineering in 1982 before attending Southern Illinois University for graduate school, earning his master’s in Geology and Geophysics in 1984. He came to The Hill in 1979 after transferring from the University of Tennessee and excelled immediately, picking up All-Ohio Valley Conference First Team honors in 1979 and Kodak/American Football Coaches All-American First Team honors in 1980 when he led the Hilltoppers in total tackles (111).

For all the success of his first two seasons, Ford’s greatest was yet to come as he earned CoSIDA Academic All-American First Team accolades in 1981, still one of just seven Hilltoppers – only the second at the time – to earn the distinction. Ford’s 171 career assisted tackles are currently eighth all-time at WKU.

“We are tremendously thankful to Sarah and Tim Ford for the impact they have made on our football program,” Director of Athletics Todd Stewart said. “Tim is an outstanding example to all of our student-athletes on what can be achieved by exhibiting commitment, dedication and focus on and off the field. We are proud of the commitment Tim is making as a former Hilltopper student-athlete by re-investing in our current students and those to come in the future.”

“It is an honor and privilege for us to support the WKU football program,” said Tim and Sarah Ford. “As a former student-athlete and football player at WKU, being able to benefit this outstanding program is very gratifying. We’re confident that resources provided to the WKU football program will translate to further Hilltopper success. Go Tops!”

The Fords, who made a significant private financial contribution with the Hilltopper Athletic Foundation, currently reside between Houston, Texas and Franklin, Tenn. Mr. Ford has worked in the oil industry as a petroleum geoscientist for over 30 years.
WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / November 15, 2016
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

WKU ATHLETICS RAISES GRADUATION SUCCESS RATE FOR FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Athletics’ overall graduation success rate (GSR) improved for the fifth-straight year in the NCAA’s latest release for freshman classes from 2006-09, with four teams posting a perfect 100 GSR score.

WKU’s overall GSR for 14 sport programs was a school-record 83, which improved upon the 82 scored in the last release and the 80 scored in the before that. In consecutive years, four WKU teams posted perfect GSRs: men’s golf, softball, volleyball and women’s tennis, with golf, softball and volleyball also having perfect scores in last year’s release.

Volleyball (11), men’s golf (8), and softball (4) have all posted perfect GSR scores in years they have been eligible to report.

WKU and Louisville both posted an 83 GSR score to lead Kentucky’s FBS members in the rankings. Among Conference USA members, WKU ranks sixth out of the 14 current members of the league in the report.

The GSRs released Tuesday are based on the four freshmen classes in Division I entering from 2006 to 2009. The NCAA calculates the rates based upon the number of student-athletes who graduated within six years after initially enrolling, in addition to those who left an institution prior to graduating but would have been academically eligible to compete.

The GSR was developed by the NCAA as part of its academic reform initiative to more accurately measure the success of Division I student-athletes by better accounting for the many different academic paths followed by today’s college students.
Hello ~

As part of the Conference USA Football Championship game taking place this Saturday on campus, Conference USA and WKU are partnering with USA Football to host a FUNdamentals Clinic on Friday, December 2. The clinic is **FREE** and available to children 14 years of age and under. The clinic will take place in E.A. Diddle Arena from 4-5:15 p.m. Please feel free to show up a little early to be ready to go at 4 p.m. I have attached a flier regarding the event along with a waiver that each child will need to have completed and signed by a parent or legal guardian in order to participate (please bring the waiver to the event). Please feel free to call or email me with any questions. We hope to see you there!

You can purchase tickets to the Conference USA Football Championship game on Saturday between Western Kentucky University and Louisiana Tech by calling the WKU Ticket Office at 270/745-5222, coming into the E.A. Diddle Arena ticket office in person, or by going online at https://oss.ticketmaster.com/aps/wku/EN/buy/browse#.
Conference USA and USA Football invite you to a FREE FUNDAMENTALS CLINIC

WHEN:
Friday, December 2, 2016

WHERE:
E.A. Diddle Arena
Auxiliary Gym

AGES:
14 and under

CLINIC TIME:
4:00 - 5:15 p.m.

FUNDAMENTALS introduces children to football by teaching basic skills in a FUN and energetic environment. Certified clinicians use a series of drills to show passing, catching and running skills in a non-contact setting.

All youth participants will receive a C-USA t-shirt and a ticket voucher to attend the 2016 Conference USA Football Championship Game between WKU and Louisiana Tech on Saturday, December 3!

For more information about USA Football's FUNDamentals program visit: www.usafootball.com/fun.
HILLTOPPERS WRAP UP BUSY FALL TERM OF SERVICE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU Athletics wrapped up another year of making a difference in the community as the 2016 holiday season approaches. Since the United Way Day of Caring on July 27, Hilltopper student-athletes and staff donated their time and services at more than 27 different events across the Bluegrass State.

Some of the highlights from fall semester include Big Red’s Readers, FUNdamentals Clinic, Christmas in Kentucky, Stuff the Bus and more.

Christmas in Kentucky was an outing held at the Kentucky Museum on the Western Kentucky University campus back on December 3. Both men’s and women’s golf as well as soccer and tennis student-athletes helped put on an arts and crafts program for kids while incorporating the holiday spirit with the WKU spirit.

Conference USA and USA Football worked together with WKU Athletics to put on the FUNdamentals Clinic on December 2. Both WKU student-athletes and staff were involved with introducing children to football by teaching basic skills in a fun and energetic environment. All youth participants at the free event received free admission into the C-USA Championship game the following day at the Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium.

WKU Softball continued to impress with its Big Red’s Readers program. The squad visited 13 different area elementary schools this past semester. Big Red’s Readers is a donation-driven program that puts stuffed animals into the hands of first and second grade students in the Bowling Green School District. These stuffed animals are given to the students to be used as "reading buddies" throughout the school year. Each child "adopts" their buddy and reads to them for a minimum of 20 minutes each day.

Hilltoppers With Heart, sponsored by Passport Health Plan, was founded in 2011 and is designed to give WKU student-athletes, coaches and staff the unique opportunity to make an impact in the community by volunteering time and talent with numerous organizations including United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, local schools and many more.

Passport Health Plan is a provider-sponsored, non-profit, community-based Medicaid health plan that has been contracted with Kentucky’s Cabinet for Health and Family Services to administer Medicaid benefits since 1997. Medicaid members can choose Passport to be their health care provider, and as of June 27, 2016, there are nearly 17,000 Passport members living in Region 4, which includes Warren County and the campus of Western Kentucky University.

Some Fall Community Involvement Events
- WKU vs. MTSU Blood Drive
- SAAC Canned Food Drive
- FUNdamentals Clinic C-USA
- Christmas In Kentucky
- YMCA Camp (football)
- Rich Pond Elementary Field Trip
- Warren County Youth Basketball Tryouts
- Stuff the Bus
- Courageous Kids
- Special Olympics (softball)
- Big Red’s Readers
- Hurricane Matthew Relief
- Golf State Championship
- Alzheimer Walk
- Family Enrichment Center Mud Run
- Light Up Downtown