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SANFORD ADDS JIMMY LINDSEY TO COACHING STAFF ON TUESDAY

Bowling Green, Ky. — WKU head football coach Mike Sanford filled another position on his coaching staff on Tuesday with the addition of Jimmy Lindsey as defensive line coach.

"I am excited to add Jimmy Lindsey to our coaching staff," Sanford said. "Coach Lindsey is a technician of defensive line play who will add NFL coaching experience to our defensive staff room, and he is synonymous with Georgia recruiting."

Lindsey comes to The Hill after one season at Georgia Southern where he served in a similar capacity. Prior to working in Statesboro, Lindsey spent four seasons at Furman as the defensive line coach and added the title of assistant head coach in 2015. At Furman, Lindsey mentored defensive end Gary Wilkins to All-America honors during his senior season in 2014 and a contract with the Oakland Raiders. Lindsey also helped Furman win a Southern Conference championship in 2013.

"I am very excited about this new opportunity in my coaching career, and I think Coach Sanford has put a great staff together," Lindsey said. "I cannot wait to get to Bowling Green to get started with WKU, a program which has a great tradition of excellence."

Before Furman, Lindsey spent two seasons at his alma mater, Chattanooga, coaching the defensive line and special teams. In 2011, four of Lindsey’s defensive linemen earned All-SoCon honors including first-teamer Josh Williams. Lindsey also spent time coaching at Tennessee-Martin, Miami (OH), Gardner-Webb and with four NFL teams in the Minority Coaching Internship program.

During his time at Gardner-Webb (2003-06), Lindsey coached the defensive line and line backers as well as served as the recruiting coordinator. One of Lindsey’s products, Harold Wells, was named the 2004 I-AA Football Gazette National Defensive Lineman of the Year, and defensive end Brian Johnson was drafted by the Kansas City Chiefs in 2008.

Lindsey, a 2001 graduate from Chattanooga with a degree in sports administration, is married to the former Lauren Thomas, and the couple has one daughter, Kiara. Lindsey, a former linebacker, was a team captain at Chattanooga during his senior season in 1999 and the recipient of UTC’s Marco Sheppard Mr. Hustle Award.

THE LINDSEY FILE

PERSONAL
Born: Aug. 22, 1977
Hometown: Morven, N.C.
College: Chattanooga, ’01
Wife: Lauren
Children: Kiara

PLAYING CAREER (Linebacker)
College: Chattanooga (1996-99)

COACHING CAREER
2000-01: Chattanooga (Assistant)
2002: Chattanooga (Linebackers)
2003-06: Gardner-Webb (Defensive Line/Linebackers/Special Teams/Recruiting Coordinator)
2007-08: Miami (Ohio) (Defensive Ends)
2009: Tennessee-Martin (Defensive Line)
2010-11: Chattanooga (Defensive Line/Special Teams)
2012-14: Furman (Defensive Line)
2015: Furman (Assistant Head Coach/Defensive Line)
2016: Georgia Southern (Defensive Line)

NFL MINORITY COACHING INTERNSHIPS
2006: Cleveland Browns
2008: Detroit Lions
2010: Denver Broncos
2013: San Diego Chargers
SANFORD TABS JUNIOR ADAMS AS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR/WIDE RECEIVERS COACH

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — With a background in high-scoring, diverse offenses, Junior Adams has been named WKU’s offensive coordinator and wide receivers coach, head coach Mike Sanford announced on Wednesday.

“Adding Junior Adams to our offensive staff room is an absolute coup for us,” Sanford said. “His background in innovate offenses and coaching wide receivers is without equal, and I couldn’t be more excited to have Junior as our offensive coordinator.”

“I am elated to join Coach Sanford’s staff at WKU, a program with a history of explosive, high-scoring offenses,” Adams added. “This is a tremendous opportunity as the next step in my coaching career, and I cannot wait to get started.”

Adams, who comes to The Hill after three seasons at Sanford’s alma mater, Boise State, served as the Broncos’ passing game coordinator and wide receivers coach in 2016 and has coached wide receivers on the blue turf since 2014. Under his direction, Boise State’s wide receivers flourished and set records on a seemingly annual basis.

This past season, Boise State posted the first pair of 1,000-yard receivers in school history in Thomas Sperbeck and Cedrick Wilson. Boise State joined the Hilltoppers in 2016 as one of only four schools in the nation with a pair of 1,000-yard receivers. Sperbeck finished his career at BSU as a two-time first-team All-Mountain West Conference honoree and the school’s career leader in receiving yardage with 3,601 while his 2015 marks of 88 catches for 1,412 yards either set or tied the school’s single-season record. Sperbeck’s 224 career receptions also ranked fourth in program history while his 1,272 yards this past season trailed only his 2015 record in the books. He was also the first Boise State receiver to post two 80-catch seasons.

Boise State’s passing game finished No. 15 nationally in 2016, averaging 298.3 yards per game while ranking No. 9 in passer rating at 161.38 and No. 7 in yards per attempt (9.6). Adams also helped to develop Wilson into one of the nation’s top big play threats as his 20.2 yard per catch average ranked No. 8 nationally.

Adams’ evolution as an offensive mind draws from not only the Boise State tree, but also from his five seasons as wide receivers coach at Eastern Washington under noted offensive mind Beau Baldwin. Regularly mentioned as one of the top passing teams in college football, the Eagles went to the FCS playoffs in four of the five seasons Adams was on staff and won the 2010 FCS National Championship with consecutive appearances in the semifinals each of his final two seasons (2012-13). In each of Adams’ five seasons with the Eagles, the team finished in the top-10 nationally in passing offense four of five times including a No. 1 overall finish in 2011 with a staggering 368.4 passing yards per game.

In 2013, the Eagles ranked fourth-nationally in the FCS in passing offense (349.8) and had two receivers ranked in the top-10 nationally in receiving yardage. Then-freshman Cooper Kupp led the nation in receiving yards with 1,691, the fourth-most in FCS history, while senior Ashton Clark ranked sixth with 1,233 yards. Kupp went on to become just the second freshman wide receiver since 1990 to earn first team FCS All-America honors (Randy Moss, 1996), and was also the recipient of the Jerry Rice Award, given annually to the top freshman in the FCS. Kupp’s 14-consecutive games with a receiving touchdown also broke the FCS record.

Kupp went on to enjoy a breakout year in 2015 as he won the Walter Payton Award, given to the top player in the FCS, and was named the national offensive player of the year by both STATS LLC and FCS ADA. He set FCS career records for receiving yards, touchdowns and receptions.
A former All-American wide receiver himself, Adams developed three other 1,000-yard receivers while at EWU including Brandon Kaufman who, in 2010, broke the FCS receiving yardage record with 1,850 yards. In 2012, as Kaufman was set to graduate, two of his fellow senior receivers had also recorded 1,000-yard seasons in their careers under Adams’ direction including Nicholas Edwards and Greg Herd in 2011.

The 2004 graduate of Montana State with a degree in sociology, Adams has also received multiple grants as a part of the Bill Walsh Minority Coaching Fellowship which has given him the opportunity to work at summer training camps with NFL teams including the Oakland Raiders (2010), Indianapolis Colts (2011) and Minnesota Vikings (2012).

A native of Fremont, Calif., Adams got his start in collegiate coaching at Montana State where he coached receivers and kick returners from 2004-06. In 2007, he coached the same positions at Prosser High where he worked with Tom Moore, father of former Boise State and current NFL quarterback Kellen Moore. The Mustangs went 14-0 that season and won the WIAA 2A State Championship. Adams also spent one season at Chattanooga (2008) before returning to the Northwest and beginning his path at EWU.

THE ADAMS FILE

PERSONAL
Born: Oct. 20, 1979
Hometown: Fremont, Calif.
College: Montana State, ‘04

PLAYING CAREER (Wide Receiver)
College: Oregon State (1999-00); Montana State (2001-02)

COACHING CAREER
2004-06: Montana State (Wide Receivers/Kick Returners)
2007: Prosser HS (Wash.) (Wide Receivers/Kick Returners)
2008: Chattanooga (Assistant)
2009-13: Eastern Washington (Wide Receivers)
2014-15: Boise State (Wide Receivers)
2016: Boise State (Passing Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers)

BOWL EXPERIENCE
2000: Fiesta (Oregon State, Player)
2014: Fiesta (Boise State, Coach)
2015: Poinsettia (Boise State, Coach)
2016: Cactus (Boise State, Coach)

BILL WALSH MINORITY COACHING FELLOWSHIPS
2010: Oakland Raiders
2011: Indianapolis Colts
2012: Minnesota Vikings
Opening statement…
“Certainly the last three and a half weeks have been a whirlwind for me personally, the staff that we have put together and my family as well. It has been a very efficient operation for the point we are at right now. I felt like I was at the Boca Raton Bowl and being mentioned as a one man band. I was trying to play a lot of instruments simultaneously. I cannot be more excited having a guitar player, a drummer and a saxophone player. Now we have a lot of players of musical instruments. I’m ecstatic about the group of coaches that we have been able to put together in a short period of time. It was a very easy process for me and really because of my exposure to so many different programs and different levels and really having a chance to trust my eyes in this process. I think that’s the number one thing I’ve heard, you really only have one opportunity to get it right with your first staff. I’m certainly going to default to what I can see with my own eyes and the relationships that I’ve had a chance to build. More importantly, I wanted to find the perfect fit for Western Kentucky University on this assistant coaches, coordinators and operations staff. I feel really good about where we are at from that standpoint.”

On facing Clayton White’s defense at N.C. State this year with Notre Dame and being held to three points…
“You know, I think that game put the exclamation point on it. If you want to talk about the interview process, I feel like my interview process to get the head coaching job at Western Kentucky was with Todd Stewart in 2010. With seeing me work, seeing me recruit and how I interacted with the players. I think that we my personal interview process, in addition to going forth with the traditional interview process. Todd Stewart trusted his eyes and I had the same opportunity with Clayton White to be on the same staff with him and see how he works, what kind of family man he is, what a great father he is and a great husband to Kelly (White). And I’ve also had the chance to see his intellect and the way he thinks about football. So if there was an interview process, it would have been the three years we worked together on the same staff. And not because we are friends, even though we are, but more importantly I want this defense to be the best in Conference USA.”

On offensive coordinator Junior Adams…
“Going with the theme of trusting my eyes, the big thing with Junior is he’s a guy who I’ve been in the foxhole with. I’ve coordinated with him, and when you get a chance to coordinate it’s really about the guys who surround you, because they really need to take your message, they need to take your scheme, and they need to go teach it to their respective groups. I really don’t believe I’ve been around as good of a football mind, as good of a teacher, and as good of a guy to be in the foxhole with from a game-planning standpoint as Junior Adams. Additionally, I’ve been exposed to a lot of different parts of the country in coaching, so I’ve gotten to know a lot of the receivers coaches in America. I truly believe this - a lot of people have press conference fodder and what not - that Junior Adams is one of the best two or three wide receiver technicians and developers in the country. … I feel really good about his ability to coordinate and his intellect, because he will be going through that process with me. This receiver core - which is going to be young, but has a lot of talent - is going to be developed by one of the top wide receiver coaches in all of college football.”

On defensive coordinator Clayton White…
“First off, Clayton is incredibly bright and he has an infectious personality, but he also has a high standard of which he wants his players to play, and I’ve seen that both here at WKU back in 2010 and really dating back to Stanford. I’ve had the chance to see first-hand what he could do defensively as a coach, as a teacher, and as one who has a high demand on his players, and they, in turn, play hard for him. I wanted to get a defensive coordinator who has a great track record of being around some of the best defensive minds in college football. … I had the chance to coach against him and Dave Huxtable at NC State this year and - I’m not 100-percent sure, but I don't think I've ever been a part of a shutout either as a player or as a coach - we only scored three points
against them. Watching them on film and going into that game - and not just because we played that game in a hurricane - we were very concerned about facing that defensive unit because it was a combination of talent, sound and simple scheme, and there are opportunities for guys to play fast and play early. With that being said, Clayton's a guy who's going to adapt the system to the personnel, so what you saw from NC State's defense isn't necessarily going to be what you'll see from WKU in 2017. He has surrounded himself with really good defensive coaches who can also implement ideas and add to what he has been around.”

**On adjusting offensive personnel to fit a scheme...**

“The great thing about the offensive structure that I’ve personally had the chance to be a part of at Notre Dame, Stanford, here at WKU with Coach Taggart and at Boise State, is those systems are all malleable. Those systems can be heavy tight end based or heavy wide receiver based, and the beauty of it all is we’re going to show all of that to defenses. We obviously have a very competitive and open position at tight end, and we want to build that through the recruiting process and potentially look at the graduate transfer market as that thing unfolds. We want to be very multiple in what we do, but if we don’t have the bodies at tight end, then we’ll be very heavy wide receiver based, or very heavy running back based because we have several very young and impressive running backs who are coming up, as well as the potential of seeing where Leon Allen is going into fall camp.”

**On running back Leon Allen’s potential return...**

“I haven’t had a chance to really get to know Leon - Coach Sanford, Sr. certainly has - but I think the biggest thing for me as it pertains to Leon, is I want him to be a success story here at WKU. He was one of the best running backs in the country over the course of his first few years on The Hill. I think Leon has shown a willingness and determination to want to be a guy who finishes right. Our vision for this program - what we want to see - is guys holding that WKU diploma in one hand and five championship rings in the other on every finger, and I want Leon to be a guy who completes that mission with a great sixth year here.”
A headshot and action shot of Dartt are attached. Credit Mount Union Athletics.
Sanford will have a media availability TODAY at 11:30 a.m. CT in the Paul Just Media room

GEOFF DARTT TABBED TO LEAD OFFENSIVE LINE ON SANFORD’S WKU STAFF

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — A five-time national champion as both a player and coach, Geoff Dartt has been added to the WKU coaching staff as offensive line coach, head coach Mike Sanford announced on Friday.

"Geoff comes from one of the most respected and successful football program in the country,” said Sanford. “With five national championships as a player and coach, he is the right person to lead one of our tone-setting position groups, the offensive line."

"I am thrilled to join Coach Sanford's staff here at WKU,” Dartt said. “There is a strong tradition of physical offensive line play on The Hill, and our goal will be to uphold that tradition and continue to have one of the most tenacious offensive fronts in the country."

Dartt comes to Bowling Green after five seasons at his alma mater, Division III powerhouse Mount Union, where he served the past four seasons as offensive coordinator and all five as offensive line coach. Not only did the Raiders win national championships in both 2012 and 2015 with Dartt on staff, the run also included four-straight Ohio Athletic Conference championships (2012-15).

Under Dartt’s direction as offensive coordinator, Mount Union finished with a top-5 offense three times including the top offense in the nation in 2014 and led the country in First Downs Offense each of his four seasons as offensive coordinator. In 2014 and 2015, behind the play of quarterback Kevin Burke – the Gagliardi Trophy winner, given to the top player in Division III – the Raiders posted the No. 1 scoring offense. Dartt also coached his center, Mitch Doraty, to consecutive DIII Rimington Awards in both 2015 and 2016.

With Dartt on staff at Mount Union, the program went 70-4 with four consecutive appearances in the Stagg Bowl, two national championships and four conference championships.

Prior to returning to Mount Union, Dartt spent four seasons (2008-11) as an assistant coach at Wheaton (Ill.) College where he spent the first two seasons working exclusively with the offensive tackles and tight ends before transitioning to offensive line coach for his final two seasons. While at Wheaton, he also coordinated video operations, coordinated the offense for the junior varsity team and was an assistant strength coach.

The Port Clinton, Ohio native was a three-year letterman along the offensive line at Mount Union and won national championships as a player in 2002, 2005 and 2006 while adding All-OAC honors in 2007. During the 2005 and 2006 national championship seasons, Dartt’s offensive coordinator and position coach was Matt Campbell who went on to enjoy a four-year run as head coach at Toledo (35-15, 24-8) and is now at Iowa State.

Dartt and his wife, the former Jan Kehres, are expecting their first child in February. He earned his degree in health and physical education in 2008 from Mount Union.

THE DARTT FILE

PERSONAL
Born: Dec. 22, 1983
Hometown: Port Clinton, Ohio
College: Mount Union, ‘08
Wife: Jan

PLAYING CAREER (Offensive Line)
College: Mount Union (2002-07)

COACHING CAREER
2008-09: Wheaton (Ill.) (Offensive Tackles/Tight Ends)
2010-11: Wheaton (Ill.) (Offensive Line)
2012: Mount Union (Offensive Line)
2013-16: Mount Union (Offensive Coordinator/Offensive Line)
Opening statement...
“First off I would like to say I appreciate you guys being here and coming out. I just want to say a couple things. Number one, to coach Mike Sanford for reaching out and giving me this opportunity to come back to The Hill, coach some football and be the defensive coordinator here. Todd Stewart also for believing in me, obviously him and Mike (Sanford) collaborating together to get me back here. I’m excited to get things going right now. It’s just a bunch of recruiting going on and we just finished a campus tour. It was my second campus tour so I was just trying to get out of it, but it didn’t quite work as Mike (Sanford) said we needed to get another one since it has been six years. But I’m excited to be back here at Western Kentucky because this is a really, really nice school and great place. What I remember about WKU the most is the community, support from the administration and just from the families, too. It was a great place to coach football for the one season I was there, so I’m excited to be back.”

On the excitement of his first defensive coordinator job...
“It’s one of those situations where every offseason coaches get opportunities, and when this one came along it was like a dream come true to be honest with you. Coaching for 15-16 years, football has been in my blood - this is my 31st fall of football. I love football, I’m 100-percent family and football. I’m just excited to get going as a defensive coordinator, getting a staff together and getting on the board and coaching these kids up, because this is a really good football team. They lost some players, but we know this program is set for success. These guys are eager to be coached and I’m eager to coach them.”

On the challenge of balancing recruiting with getting to know the team...
“Especially with WKU not starting school back until the 23rd, right now it’s all text messaging, phone calls and following each other on Twitter, just trying to get to know each other and trying to put names with faces. Because we know football is all relationships, trust and honesty, and being able to coach kids and look them in their eyes. But yes, it’s definitely a balance right now, and with the recruiting part it’s the same thing. Our staff came from different schools bringing prospects they had, and we’re trying to combine and merge those guys together. The previous staff did a really good job of building a class and giving us a foundation to work off of. So now, we’re just trying to merge nine different assistants and the previous staff, then go out and try to sign the best class that we can possibly sign in February 2017.”

On the base defensive scheme he plans to run at WKU...
“I have transitioned to schools - and you go in there with a scheme which might not fit the players - but everywhere I’ve been has been four-down. But you know there’s four-down front with three linebackers, there’s 4-2-5’s and there’s also 3-4 - kind of what they did last year. They were a solid defense last year, they had games where things didn’t go their way defensively, but for the most part I thought they were solid based on the stats and some of the film that I’ve seen. But philosophy-wise, defensive-wise, it’s definitely going to be a four-down front - whether it’s a 4-3 or a 4-2-5 or a lot of mixed different fronts just to keep the offense off-balance. You don’t want people to know really what you’re doing defensively, but definitely that’s going to be the foundation, it starts up front.”
On the growth that has taken place at WKU since 2010...

“I’m always a fan of places that invested in me. Number one to start with the people that invested in me, the school and the football program. I have a little room in my home where my trophies are, my footballs are. I still have WKU’s first FBS win. I think it was at Louisiana-Lafayette, 54-23, I think that was the score. I could be wrong, but that was the first win for us with coach (Willie) Taggart. And now where there are with back-to-back champs, bowl wins, guys getting drafted and being No. 3 on Mel Kiper’s board. I’m proud of the program because they invested in me so I’ve always watched their scores, kept in touch with the Hilltoppers. And if I knew somebody here, previous coaches, former players, we still talk. It was a special year in 2010. It was a tough year, honestly. But we had some good players like Bobby (Rainey) and Kawaun (Jakes). I’ve always kept in touch with the Hilltoppers. I’m very proud of what they’ve done and that’s going to be the first thing I tell the players.”
WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 10, 2017
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Headshot of Maurice Crum attached; courtesy WKU Athletics

MAURICE CRUM ADDED TO FOOTBALL STAFF AS LINEBACKERS COACH

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Head Football Coach Mike Sanford announced the final addition to his full-time assistant coaching staff on Tuesday with the addition of former Notre Dame captain and linebacker Maurice Crum who will lead WKU’s linebackers this season.

"I couldn’t be more excited to add someone with a passion for football and for the linebacker position like Maurice Crum to our coaching staff," Sanford said. "Maurice understands what is required to be a successful linebacker on and off the field, and he will be a great mentor for our linebacking corps this season."

"I am both anxious and eager to get into that linebacker room and begin coaching these players," Crum said. "As a recent former player myself, I hope to be able to instill some of my knowledge into their game and continue the tradition of great linebackers here on The Hill."

Crum, a former standout linebacker at Notre Dame from 2005-08, spent the 2016 seasons working for Mike Sanford Sr., at Indiana State as the cornerbacks and nickelbacks coach. During his playing career, Crum played in 50 games with 42 consecutive starts and registered 306 tackles, 23 tackles for loss and eight sacks. His 306 career tackles rank 11th in Notre Dame history. A two-time team captain in 2007 and 2008, Crum was one of only 17 players in school history to accomplish that feat.

Prior to his time at Indiana State, Crum was a defensive graduate assistant at Notre Dame in 2015 which included an appearance in the Fiesta Bowl where he worked with Sanford. Crum’s post-college playing career included a three-year stint in the UFL (2009-11) and three seasons on Charlie Weis’ staff at Kansas in various roles included defensive graduate assistant (2012), Assistant Director of Operations (2013) and Director of High School Relations (2014). A 2008 graduate of Notre Dame with a degree in sociology, Crum is married to the former Crysta Swayzer, and the couple has three sons, Maurice III, Allen and Noah. Crum’s father, Maurice Sr., was a consensus All-American at Miami in 1990.

THE CRUM FILE
PERSONAL
Born: May 29, 1986
Hometown: Riverview, Fla.
College: Notre Dame, ’09
Wife: Crysta
Children: Maurice, Allen, and Noah

PLAYING CAREER (Linebacker)
College: Notre Dame (2005-08)
Pro: Sacramento Mountain Lions (2009-11/UFL)

COACHING CAREER
2012: Kansas (Defensive Graduate Assistant)
2015: Notre Dame (Defensive Graduate Assistant)
2016: Indiana State (Cornerbacks/Nickelbacks)

BOWL EXPERIENCE
2005: Fiesta (Notre Dame, Player)
2006: Sugar (Notre Dame, Player)
2008: Hawaii (Notre Dame, Player)
2015: Fiesta (Notre Dame, Coach)
Opening statement…
“It’s a pleasure to be here at WKU coming from Boise State. The opportunity that Mike Sanford has given me to be able to coordinate my first offense, I couldn’t turn it down. Obviously, meeting Mike in 2014 at Boise State, we had a great year. It was fun to work with him and I couldn’t be happier to be where I am right now.”

On first impressions of WKU’s offense…
“We ran through personnel a little bit, but this last week we’ve been trying to hammer in on recruiting. I just got out of meeting right now where we were planning our trips, our visits and who we want to go see. But this offense was the highest-scoring offense in the country last year, so we have some big shoes to fill. We’re ready for it, we have a quarterback - that's where we start at - and we have some good depth at wide receiver, so we’re excited to work with them. Back to back 10-win seasons, we know what we’re getting into and we’re excited about it, we’re accepting the challenge. The offensive staff that Mike has put together, I like who we have in that room.”

On the WKU offensive coaching staff…
“There’s a lot of good, great minds, Spurrier, Mike Sanford, Sr., Geoff Dartt - who’s a great offensive mind - Ryan Mahaffey, I’m excited to work with them. They have the experience and we all get along. You know, we’re all going through the honeymoon period as we like to call it, but we all get along. We have good dialogue in there, and like I said, it’s good, great minds, and you can tell that when you get in the room. The continuity of the guys in there, everybody’s talking, everybody’s getting along and everybody has good ideas. We’re able to evaluate the recruits, for example, and evaluate the guys we have on the team right now. You can tell we have a group of good evaluators; their eyes are right, and that’s the first step.”

On what type of offense he plans to run…
“With the background, we’re going to start with the Boise State system. But Mike, being at Notre Dame and being at Stanford, myself being at Eastern Washington prior to Boise State, we’re going to try and melt those systems together. At Eastern Washington, we took what the defense gave us, the quick-pass game was really good, I love that part of it. We put guys in the right position to make plays, put them towards their strengths. At Boise State, that offense was fun to play in and fun to coach in. It’s high-flying, but we do lean on the run game a little bit. We want to be physical up front and establish the run and we want to take our shots vertically down the field, but most importantly just executing plays and winning each play.”

On why he enjoys coaching wide receivers…
“I played it, I’m one of them. I go to sleep as one, I wake up as one and I walk around as one. But it’s not just about coaching wide receivers, it’s about coaching a unit and all the personalities you have in that room. Being in a room of 18-to-22 year olds at a point in their lives where you can help them develop and grow is the part that we like the most.”
On working with Mike Sanford at Boise State...

“I was driving through Montana while Mike was on his way at the time to the Rose Bowl Game with Stanford and we talked for probably 30 minutes before he was about to become the offensive coordinator for Boise State. The conversation we had was smooth, it flowed and we were talking the same language and saying the same things. It was a good first impression and I knew that he had something special. When he arrived at Boise and we sat in those meeting rooms, you could see that Mike’s a fast-thinker and he thinks forward. He’s very bright and when people like him walk in a room, you know who they are. Spending that year with mike, we were able to game plan every single week - Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday together, just Mike and me locked in the offensive staff room from 7:30 in the morning sometimes until midnight. To be able to get along and not only to be able to have a relationship as co-workers, but to have a friendship, I think it goes further than football with Mike and me. The year that we put together at Boise State was something special and it will never be forgotten.”
Opening statement...
“I’ve recruited a kid once here about 10 years ago, but other than that I haven’t spent a lot of time at Western Kentucky. But I’ve known Mike Sanford over the years, being a coach’s son and just have crossed paths a bunch. So to have the opportunity to work with him, I’m looking forward to that. I think he’s a sharp guy, has a sharp mind and I think he is going to be an excellent head coach here. I look forward to working with coach (Junior) Adams. Coach (Mike) Sanford said we are going to run this Boise State offense, so I’m looking forward to learning that and seeing how that goes. But the people I do know, every time they talk about Western Kentucky it’s facilities, players, what they’ve done, what they’ve accomplished, where they’re going, bowl games they’re playing in - it’s just a special place. Coach (Mike) Sanford has put together a good staff, we’ve got great people on offense and defense, strength coach. So we got all the parts ready to get moving. These next couple weeks will be critical with recruiting, putting together this class and the future of this program. But I’m excited to be here and I think we have every reason in the world to continue the success that they’ve had in this program and improve upon that.”

On being the assistant head coach and specifically coaching the quarterbacks...
“My history has mostly been with receivers, I’ve had some Co-OC titles and I’ve called plays for a few years. But to actually have the title as quarterbacks coach, to be able to meet with those guys and that’s a pretty important role in any offense. I appreciate coach (Mike) Sanford and really coach (Junior) Adams trusting me with that position.”

On what you can offer to the quarterbacks with your experience...
“Hopefully a lot. I tell you, I had a great year last year with (Oklahoma OC) Lincoln Riley and (Oklahoma QB) Baker Mayfield. About the whole year I spent a lot of time with those guys offensively. Lincoln Riley is a really sharp guy with what he teaches and how he teaches it. It was a little different experience with my time at South Carolina and my father. Baker Mayfield is a special guy with how he learns, comes to work and the standard that he puts upon himself. So he was really neat to be around – he’s a special, special player. Then just the history and background at South Carolina and Florida. I think I got a lot to offer. We’ve talked a little bit offensively with what we are going to try to do. I really look forward to getting out there with Mike (White). Mike’s an excellent player.”

On Mike White and what he brings to the table...
“Well, clearly just watching him play, you like the guy. I have not met him yet. I think there is something about shaking a guy’s hand, looking him in the eyes and start talking to him. I’ve talked to him on the phone a few times, he’s down in Florida. But your background, where have you been, what offenses have you been in, he could explain all of it. My first coach was this, this is the offense that we ran, and he went through a few formations and plays. So, you can tell he is a sharp guy and he knows his stuff. He’s got a good personality, he’s outgoing, he asked questions. So I look forward to meeting him, handing him this book and start get moving into this offense.”
On what he likes most about coaching...

“You know, there’s so many things. To be a college football coach is a special opportunity. But to have an opportunity to work with young men, watch them develop – especially in college. I had the opportunity to work in the NFL for a couple years, which is kind of a different environment. But to be able to recruit guys, to be able to recruit families to bring them to a college, to really watch them go from a boy to a man, watch them get a degree, to watch them develop so much on and off the field. The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat, there’s something really in that and as much time as you put in and how much effort and work to be able to get on the field and achieve things, is a remarkable accomplishment for so many young men. So it is a very rewarding aspect for me.”
HILLTOPPERS ATOP NUMEROUS STATISTICAL CATEGORIES TO CLOSE 2016 SEASON

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — With last night’s national championship game marking the close of the 2016 college football campaign, the Conference USA Champion WKU Hilltoppers ended the season ranked among the nation’s best in numerous statistical categories.

For the second time in program history – and first in the FBS Era – WKU finished the season ranked as the No. 1 scoring offense in the country, tallying a school-record 45.5 points per game over the course of the season including seven games of 50 or more points. The Hilltoppers last finished with the nation’s top scoring offense in 1973 when they averaged 37.7 points per game.

WKU also led the nation in total points scored (637) and yards per play (7.65). WKU’s 7,324 total yards of offense in 14 games were second nationally behind only national champion Clemson (7,555 in 15 games) while ranking fifth nationally in total offense (523.1).

Individually, senior running back Anthony Wales led the nation in rushing touchdowns (27), scoring (13.4 points per game), total points scored (174) and total touchdowns (29). Kick returner Kylen Towner led the nation with an NCAA-record 40.3 yard per return average. Wales’ marks are all program-firsts while Towner becomes the second WKU returner to lead the nation in kick return average (Davlin Mullen, 1982).

Quarterback Mike White finished his first campaign on The Hill as one of the nation’s best quarterbacks, tallying top 10 finishes in the following categories: completion percentage (67.3; 3rd), passing efficiency (181.4; 3rd), passing touchdowns (37; 8th), passing yards (4,363; 5th), passing yards per game (311.6; 8th), passing yards per completion (15.58; 3rd), and yards per passing attempt (10.49; 2nd).

WKU finished the season in the Top 25 by a national publication for the second-consecutive season, as USA Today ranked WKU No. 23 in the nation in its final 1-128 team ranking poll on Tuesday.

The Hilltoppers also ranked in the top 10 in a bevy of other notable categories:

- Punt Return Average (17.93) – 2nd
- Rushing Defense (97.2) – 2nd
- Kickoff Return Average (26.67) – 3rd
- Passing Efficiency (174.87) – 3rd
- Passing Offense (336.8) – 5th
- First Downs Offense (344) – 6th
- Passing Yards per Completion (15.46) – 6th
- Tackles for Loss Allowed (4.29) – 6th
- Winning Percentage (78.6) – 8th
SANFORD ADDS SUPPORT STAFFERS ON WEDNESDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Head Football Coach Mike Sanford announced the addition of three support staffers and a graduate assistant on Tuesday as the first-year head coach comes closer to completing his staff.

Joining Sanford on The Hill in 2017 will be a familiar name and face on The Hill as Nick Uhlenhopp returns as Assistant Athletic Director for Football Operations. Sanford has also added two staffers previously at Notre Dame in Laura Thomas as Director of Player Development and Zach Grant as Director of Player Personnel. Offensive graduate assistant Matthew Mitchell has also joined the coaching staff.

Uhlenhopp previously spent three seasons on The Hill as Director of Football Operations under former head coach David Elson and has seen the program since the early stages of the FBS transition. Prior to his return to Bowling Green, Uhlenhopp spent one season as the DFO at Western Michigan and oversaw all areas of the program’s operation including the team’s trip to the 2016 Cotton Bowl.

A 2002 graduate of Graceland University, Uhlenhopp spent six years at Iowa State as assistant recruiting coordinator (2010-13) and assistant DFO (2013-15) where he handled a variety of team needs including travel, team camps, community service events, recruiting operations, NFL scouts and walk-on programs.

Uhlenhopp and his wife, Andrea, have two daughters, Laney and Landry.

Thomas, a 2015 graduate of Notre Dame, comes to The Hill after spending the 2016 season working for her alma mater in the football recruiting office. On The Hill, her role will involve daily management of community outreach events for the Hilltopper student-athletes as well as for Sanford. Thomas will also assist Uhlenhopp in program operations on a day-to-day basis.

After earning her degree in film, television and theatre at Notre Dame, Thomas spent the 2015 season working with Fighting Irish Media in various roles.

Grant, also a graduate of Notre Dame, will be largely responsible for organizing the acquisition of off-campus talent and the management of WKU’s 120-man roster as well as recruiting travel schedules for Hilltopper coaches and the head coach. Grant spent three seasons working in the recruiting department at Notre Dame including the 2016 season as a recruiting personnel assistant where he worked directly with Sanford. Following that, Grant worked directly under Notre Dame’s Director of Player Personnel, David Peloquin.

Mitchell comes to The Hill after two seasons at Notre Dame where he worked as an offensive intern and analyst. During the 2015 season, Mitchell worked primarily with the quarterbacks as an offensive intern under Sanford. A former wide receiver at Wheaton (Ill.) College (2010-14), Mitchell was a two-year starter and helped lead the team to two Division III playoff berths in 2010 and 2014 and capture a pair of College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin titles (2012, 2014). As a junior, the Los Altos, Calif., native led the team in receptions (39) and receiving yards (399). A 2014 graduate of Wheaton College in communications, he is married to the former Megan Campbell.
THOMAS STALLWORTH NAMED WKU DIRECTOR OF FOOTBALL STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Thomas Stallworth, a 10-plus-year veteran in the strength and conditioning field, has been named WKU’s Director of Football Strength and Conditioning, head football coach Mike Sanford announced on Friday.

"I’m very excited to have Thomas Stallworth lead our strength and conditioning program," Sanford said. "With his experience and success, our players will have a strength development program that is second to none. Coach Stallworth is exceptional in his ability to instill a championship culture while mentoring the young men in our program."

A former letterman at linebacker at the University of Tennessee (1997-2001), Stallworth comes to The Hill following one season as the head strength and conditioning coach at Fresno State. Prior to Fresno State, Stallworth spent time at Texas Tech (2016) after a season at North Carolina State (2015-16).

The Lithonia, Ga., native spent three seasons (2012-15) at Mississippi State which included the program’s best season in school history in 2014 as the Bulldogs rose to No. 1 in the Associated Press poll behind the play of quarterback Dak Prescott en route to MSU’s first Orange Bowl berth since 1941.

While at Mississippi State, 12 Bulldogs were drafted into the NFL including seven in the first three rounds including 2012 Jim Thorpe Award winner Johnathan Banks and 2016 NFL second-team All-Pro Bernardick McKinney. From the 2015 NC State team Stallworth worked with, three players were drafted including quarterback Jacoby Brissett.

Prior to his three seasons at Mississippi State, Stallworth spent eight years leading the strength and conditioning programs at Grambling State (2008-11) and South Carolina State (2004-08).

Stallworth earned his bachelor’s degree in sports management from Tennessee in 2001 before earning his masters from the school in sports administration in 2004. He is also a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

THE STALLWORTH FILE

PERSONAL
Born: March 2, 1979
Hometown: Lithonia, Ga.
College: Tennessee, ’01

PLAYING CAREER (Linebacker)
College: Tennessee (1997-2001)

COACHING CAREER
2004-08: South Carolina State (Head Strength and Conditioning Coach)
2008-11: Grambling State (Head Strength and Conditioning Coach)
2012-15: Mississippi State (Associate Strength and Conditioning Coach)
2015-16: North Carolina State (Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach)
2016: Texas Tech (Associate Director of Strength and Conditioning)
2016: Fresno State (Head Strength and Conditioning Coach)

BOWL EXPERIENCE
1997: Orange (Tennessee, Player)
1998: Fiesta (Tennessee, Player) – National Championship
1999: Fiesta (Tennessee, Player)
2000: Cotton (Tennessee, Player)
2001: Citrus (Tennessee, Player)
2012: Gator (Mississippi State, Coach)
2013: Liberty (Mississippi State, Coach)
2014: Orange (Mississippi State, Coach)
2015: Belk (NC State, Coach)
FOUR ASSISTANTS ADDED TO FOOTBALL STAFF ON FRIDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Four more staffers were added to the WKU roster on Friday with the addition of Harris Bivin (offensive graduate assistant), Brock Willis (quality control), Quinn Hollan (assistant director of strength and conditioning) and Antonio Leonard (strength and conditioning assistant).

Bivin, a native of Owensboro and former No. 1 overall prospect in Kentucky, joins the Hilltoppers after spending the 2016 season at his alma mater, Murray State. A standout lineman for the Racers, Bivin appeared in 39 games over his collegiate career at center from 2010-13 and started the final 27 consecutive games of his career, including the final five of 2011 before starting every game in both 2012 and 2013. After his college career, Bivin spent one season in the AFL with both Tampa and Los Angeles before returning to Apollo where he spent a season as an assistant coach and teacher.

Willis, a former WKU student assistant and quality control coach under David Elson from 2007-09, spent the last four seasons at South Florida where he worked as an analyst for the program working primarily with special teams. In the 2016 Birmingham Bowl, Willis assumed interim special teams coordinator duties for the No. 22 Bulls as they defeated South Carolina 46-39. Prior to USF, Willis spent one season (2012) as a graduate assistant, working with the defensive backs, at New Mexico State. That season, All-WAC team member Jeremy Harris was drafted by the Jacksonville Jaguars in the seventh round of the 2013 NFL Draft. Willis also spent two seasons at Bethel University (Tenn.) as safeties coach where he helped Darian Jones (2011) and Derrick Williams (2010) to All-Mid South West Division Honors.

Willis played collegiately at Kentucky Wesleyan in 2006 before transferring to WKU where he earned his degree in business and marketing education.

Hollan comes to WKU from Fresno State where he worked with Director of Football Strength and Conditioning Thomas Stallworth assisting with the football program. Prior to Fresno, Hollan spent time at Mississippi State working primarily with track and field and softball as a strength and conditioning graduate assistant. During his two years in Starkville, the Bulldog men finished in the top 10 both years while the women finished inside the top 20 each season. A 2014 graduate of the University of Northern Iowa with a degree in exercise science, Hollan is engaged to his fiancé, Ebony.

Leonard comes to The Hill after a year at North Carolina A&T where he was an assistant strength and conditioning coach, working primarily with football and track/field. A former player himself, Leonard began his playing career at Southern Miss (2007) where he played as a true freshman, appearing in all 13 games that year for the Golden Eagles. Following his freshman season, Leonard transferred to Grambling State where he helped the Tigers win a SWAC championship in 2011. Leonard went on to earn his degree in recreation management in 2011 before staying at the school to serve as a graduate assistant strength coach, working with football, track, basketball, baseball, soccer, softball.
HIlltopper Duo enjoys strong first day at Reese's Senior Bowl

MOBILE, Ala. — WKU’s Forrest Lamp and Taywan Taylor enjoyed a successful first day of practice on Tuesday at the 2017 Reese’s Senior Bowl, held in Mobile, Ala., ahead of Saturday’s all-star game. Lamp and Taylor, both considered by professional scouts to rank among the top players at their position group, did not disappoint in their first practice with the South team, coached by the NFL’s Cleveland Browns.

“I thought (the first day) went well,” Lamp said. “It’s a little bit different because I’m playing guard and tackle down here, so I’m adjusting and learning a new offense is a little difficult but I’m looking forward to the next practice. Everything happens so much faster here so it’s something I’ll have to get used to.”

According to Pro Football Focus’ Jordan Plocher, whose team at PFF is providing position group breakdowns of each practice for the game, that versatility will serve Lamp well at the next level.

“The fact that he is able to get those reps in at two different positions, that’s pretty important,” Plocher said. “When you’re talking about the NFL and where it’s different from college, a guy like Forrest who can play multiple positions can save you a roster spot. He can maybe be a swing tackle or play the interior and pivot. Even as a rookie, I think someone could plug him in. When you’re dealing with just a 53-man roster and you have a guy like that who could possibly play five different spots, that’s a big feather in the cap. That can save an NFL team money and a roster spot.”

For Taylor, WKU’s all-time leading receiver, the opportunity to showcase his ability with some of the nation’s top players made for an exciting time as he prepared to come to Mobile.

“There are a lot of good players out here – everyone is competing so that makes for a good environment,” Taylor said. “We just came out, tried to learn and get better. The (NFL) coaches are giving everyone a good feel for what to expect at the next level, take mental reps and get better.”

It won’t be unusual for Taylor to match up against the nation’s best as WKU routinely schedules some of college football’s toughest teams, including a visit to then-No. 1 Alabama this season. That trip to Tuscaloosa, Taylor said, made him all the more ready for what is still to come in the NFL.

“Those games definitely got me ready,” Taylor added. “There are very good players out here and I was ready for it. I can’t wait to get back out here tomorrow for the next practice.”

WKU will continue to be active across social media throughout the week as Lamp and Taylor work towards Saturday’s game, set for a 1:30 p.m. CT kickoff from Ladd-Peebles Stadium and broadcast on the NFL Network.
“The arm length following the weigh-in was a concern. Even then, we started hearing industry chatter that he may be better suited at guard due to that lack of length. His production has been phenomenal for his entire career, but this will be a really big audition. One of the things that we noticed during this practice – and I’m sure the coaching staff was asked to do it – was get him some reps at both tackle and guard. He appeared to hold up a little better when he was inside at guard than he did when he was outside at tackle.”

“His positional versatility will be a big thing, as a guy who can play both tackle and guard. It will really boil down to, I think, for some teams how they view him and what he can do. His film, especially from this year, shows he can hold up out at tackle against top competition like at Alabama. For the first day, he struggled a little bit outside in the pass rush, one-on-ones, and fared a little better from what I saw inside at guard. Tomorrow, he could come out and get put out and tackle and just dominate. That’s how these things go.”

“The fact that he is able to get those reps in at two different positions, that’s pretty important. When you’re talking about the NFL and where it’s different from college, a guy like Forrest who can play multiple positions can save you a roster spot. He can maybe be a swing tackle or play the interior and pivot. Even as a rookie, I think someone could plug him in. When you’re dealing with just a 53-man roster and you have a guy like that who could possibly play five different spots, that’s a big feather in the cap. That can save an NFL team money and a roster spot.”
TAYLOR CONTINUES TO SHINE ON DAY TWO AT SENIOR BOWL

MOBILE, Ala. — Wide receiver Taywan Taylor had another strong day of practice on Wednesday, his second of the week, at the 2017 Reese’s Senior Bowl as the teams put on full pads for the first time. Taylor stood alone on the field with his WKU chrome helmet, unfortunately, as teammate Forrest Lamp sustained an ankle injury in practice on Tuesday and was not active on Wednesday. According to Lamp’s agent, “If this was an in-season game week, he would play through this, but being an all-star game situation, we made the decision to rest and continue treating the ankle for a couple days.” Lamp will stay in Mobile for the remainder of the week in hopes he will be able to participate on Saturday. With Taylor the lone representative of the Red and White, practice meant a little extra on Wednesday. “I pride myself on representing my school,” Taylor said. “I wanted to turn it up a little bit, turn up my tempo, and really compete out here now that we have these pads on.”

Rotoworld and NBC Sports Draft Writer Josh Norris has been high on Taylor in the pre-draft process, and he said following Wednesday’s session that the Louisville native has not disappointed so far. “I think the South team corners are the best corners out here, so going against the best competition this week is made for one-on-ones,” Norris said. “That’s what the teams will go back and watch. I think some people who might have had some questions about him coming into the week now have a bunch of answers.”

Norris continued, “At the very least he’s a second round talent. I don’t know if anyone will agree with me and say ‘Hey, he’s a 5-11 wide receiver’ but we’ll see with the athletic testing coming up. I think a top-50 pick is absolutely in the realm of possibility.”

WKU will continue to be active across social media throughout the week as Lamp and Taylor work towards Saturday’s game, set for a 1:30 p.m. CT kickoff from Ladd-Peebles Stadium and broadcast on the NFL Network.
“I think he’s showing exactly what he did through multiple seasons at Western Kentucky. He is a wide receiver who wins in the small wide receiver game. In its simplest form, the receiver position is won in two ways. The small receiver creating separation, sustaining it, yards after the catch. We know he does that extremely well. The big receiver game is about contested catches, 50-50 balls, and for someone who is 5-foot-11, he does that well. At least, he gives the effort, goes up and gets it. So many 5-foot-11 and smaller receivers like to stay on the ground, but he doesn’t.”

“Obviously, he is used to running a ton of vertical routes. We’re seeing him doing that and create separation at the top of his route and sustaining it. I think the South team corners are the best corners out here, so going against the best competition this week is made for one-on-ones. That’s what the teams will go back and watch. I think some people who might have had some questions about him coming into the week now have a bunch of answers.”

“It’s difficult to (project a draft round) at this point in the process. We still have athletic testing to come, and I know I like him more than most. So, I’m going to be on the higher end. But, honestly, at the very least he’s a second round talent. I don’t know if anyone will agree with me and say ‘Hey, he’s a 5-11 wide receiver’ but we’ll see with the athletic testing coming up. I think some people, somehow, view him as an inside receiver, and he’s not just an inside receiver. He can play there if you want him too, but he wins on the outside. Again, being a 5-foot-11 wide receiver who absolute wants to go up and get it at time, that’s difficult to find. I think a top-50 pick is absolutely in the realm of possibility.”
TAYLOR CONCLUDES STRONG WEEK OF PRACTICES AT SENIOR BOWL ON THURSDAY

MOBILE, Ala. — After three days of practice in Mobile, all of the focus is now on Saturday’s game for the collegiate all-stars at the 2017 Reese’s Senior Bowl, including WKU’s all-time leading receiver Taywan Taylor.

Taylor has enjoyed three productive days of practice and has drawn rave reviews from scouts and pundits alike through the process. However, it hasn’t all been about the on-field product as the game provides future professionals with forums on life as an NFL player, including a seminar on Thursday morning to help players acclimate better to the financial windfall that is just around the corner.

“It was good information for us, for our future,” Taylor said. “We’re on the brink of a lot of things, and there will be a lot of people trying to put hands in our pockets. It was all about making sure we were prepared for the future, learning how to say ‘No’, managing money and being smart. There are a lot of things we have to learn. They want us to have the right team around us.”

The Senior Bowl also provides competition across the board, and Taylor has had the opportunity to showcase what he is able to do against some of the nation’s elite cornerbacks.

“There are a lot of great players out here. LSU’s Tre’Davious White is one of the best competitors out here. He’s been challenging all of us. They’ve been all challenging us, but that’s what it’s all about. Competing and trying to make each other better.”

With that competition, Taylor has seen his stock rise, but the ever-humble Louisville native won’t let that go to his head and affect his performance moving forward.

“I hear it, but I just try to stay in my lane. It’s just a testament to how hard I’ve worked. I’m just trying to show all these scouts down here what I’m capable of against some of the best players in the nation. I’m having a blast and looking forward to going out there on Saturday and having a good game.”

WKU will continue to be active across social media throughout the week as Lamp and Taylor work towards Saturday’s game, set for a 1:30 p.m. CT kickoff from Ladd-Peebles Stadium and broadcast on the NFL Network.
HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL ANNOUNCES 2017 SCHEDULE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — A renewed rivalry, and three games at home within the first four weeks highlight the 2017 schedule for two-time defending Conference USA Champion WKU Football.

The Hilltoppers open the Mike Sanford Era at home on Sept. 2 when WKU hosts the Colonels of Eastern Kentucky for the first time since 2008. The Hilltoppers lead the all-time series 48-34-3 and have not lost at home to EKU since 1998. Sanford will aim to become the third consecutive head coach to win his career opener.

WKU then travels to Illinois on Sept. 9 before beginning C-USA play in a rematch of the 2016 championship game by hosting Louisiana Tech. It will mark the second time in three years that WKU opens their conference slate at home against the Bulldogs.

Following the start of league play, WKU steps back out of conference when the team hosts Ball State on Sept. 23; the Cardinals are another opponent the Hilltoppers have not faced since the 2008 season.

WKU gets an earlier bye week than usual in 2017, taking the week of Sept. 30 off ahead of the season’s longest road trip: 1,200 miles from Bowling Green for WKU’s first-ever game at UTEP. The Hilltoppers and Miners have squared off just once, in WKU’s inaugural C-USA season of 2014.

Charlotte jumps into the schedule as well for a first-time meeting between the two programs, on Oct. 14 at Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium, before WKU heads to Norfolk, Va., to take on Old Dominion on Oct. 21.

The Hilltoppers host Florida Atlantic on Oct. 28 before heading to Nashville for a Nov. 4 date with Southeastern Conference foe Vanderbilt.

Each of WKU’s first three seasons in C-USA ended with a matchup with the Thundering Herd of Marshall, but that will not be the case in 2017 as WKU travels to Huntington, W.Va., for the second consecutive season on Nov. 11. Rival Middle Tennessee comes to Houchens-Smith Stadium for Senior Day on Nov. 18, before WKU closes the regular season on Nov. 25 at FIU.

COMPLETE SCHEDULE

Sept. 2 - EASTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 9 - at Illinois
Sept. 16 - LOUISIANA TECH*
Sept. 23 - BALL STATE
Sept. 30 - Bye
Oct. 7 - at UTEP*
Oct. 14 – CHARLOTTE*
Oct. 21 - at Old Dominion*
Oct. 28 - FLORIDA ATLANTIC*
Nov. 4 - at Vanderbilt
Nov. 11 - at Marshall*
Nov. 18 - MIDDLE TENNESSEE*
Nov. 25 - at FIU*

Home games in ALL CAPS
* - indicates Conference USA game

WKU has a two-game home stand against LA Tech and Ball State and a two-game road swing at Vanderbilt and Marshall. It is important to note that all games are subject to date changes and some dates are expected to move in order accommodate national television. Kickoff times will be announced following the announcement of television selections.
## WKU 2017 Football Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
<td>Eastern Kentucky</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>at Illinois</td>
<td>Champaign, Ill.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Louisiana Tech*</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>at UTEP*</td>
<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 14</strong></td>
<td>Charlotte*</td>
<td><strong>Bowling Green, Ky.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 21</td>
<td>at Old Dominion*</td>
<td>Norfolk, Va.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 28</strong></td>
<td>Florida Atlantic*</td>
<td><strong>Bowling Green, Ky.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>at Vanderbilt</td>
<td>Nashville, Tenn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 11</td>
<td>at Marshall*</td>
<td>Huntington, W.Va.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nov. 18</strong></td>
<td>Middle Tennessee*</td>
<td><strong>Bowling Green, Ky.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 25</td>
<td>at FIU*</td>
<td>Miami, Fla.</td>
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Home games in **BOLD** | * Indicates Conference USA game
SENIOR BOWL WRAPS UP WKU CAREER FOR TAYWAN TAYLOR

MOBILE, Ala. — For the final time, WKU’s all-time leading receiver, Taywan Taylor, donned the signature chrome helmet of the Hilltoppers and took to the field to help his South team win, 16-15, the 2017 Reese’s Senior Bowl on Saturday in Mobile.

Taylor had one reception for 14 yards in the all-star game and flashed his ability all week during practices, proving to scouts, NFL coaches and general managers that he is ready to play at the next level.

It was a bittersweet moment for Taylor, but one he won’t forget any time soon.

“I can’t believe how fast it went by,” Taylor said. “I’m glad I made it through (the game) healthy. I’m going to miss being here at the Senior Bowl, but I had a blast. I embraced everything and had a blast out here today.”

Though the game is over, the work only ramps up for Taylor as he returns to training ahead of the NFL Scouting Combine, held in Indianapolis, Feb. 28 – Mar. 6.

“I’m ready to get back to training and get back to the grind. I’ll probably take a few days off to let my body refresh, but I’m ready to get back to it.”

It may prove hard for Taylor to remember everything he accomplished while on The Hill, including breaking every single-season and career receiving record on the books, but with some down time and his collegiate career solidly in the books, Taylor said he will find some time now to think back over all he did in the Red and White.

“I’ll definitely be able to reminisce and reflect back on my time (on The Hill). I’m going to miss it. I’m going to miss all the good people there who supported me. I’ll definitely be back on The Hill. It will be with me for life.”
NSD17 SET FOR HILLTOPPERS ON WEDNESDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — As head coach Mike Sanford welcomes his inaugural signing class, part of #ThePursuit17, on Wednesday, Feb. 1, WKU Football will have live coverage of everything happening surrounding National Signing Day 2017.

From inside the football offices at Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium, WKU’s various social media accounts will provide live coverage, video and photos of each new Hilltopper as they become official, beginning at 6 a.m. CT.

To help fans stay locked in to each new member of the signing class, WKUSports.com will be transformed into Signing Day Central, providing highlight videos and biographical information on each new signee. Sanford and each of his assistant coaches will also provide a run-down on each new Hilltopper via their Twitter pages throughout the day.

The day culminates in Sanford’s first Signing Day press conference at 2 p.m. CT, which will air live and for free on WKUSports.TV.

**Signing Day 2017 coverage will include:**
- Up-to-the-minute announcements of confirmed National Letters of Intent via @WKUFootball on Twitter
- Biographical information on each signee as well as their high school highlight video on WKUSports.com’s Signing Day Central
- Live coverage from the WKU Football offices, including video statements from the Hilltopper coaching staff they welcome the new Hilltoppers via @CoachSanfordWKU and assistant coach handles on Twitter
- Live, free video from head coach Mike Sanford’s Signing Day press conference, set for 2 p.m. on WKUSports.tv.

Additionally, Hilltopper Athletic Foundation and Touchdown Club members, or season ticket holders who reserved a space, will celebrate the signing class tomorrow evening in an event in the Jack and Jackie Harbaugh Club which also includes a meet-and-greet and breakdown of each signee by Sanford and his coaching staff. For details on the event, contact the HAF at 270-745-5321.
HILLTOPPERS WELCOME 23 SIGNEES ON NATIONAL SIGNING DAY 2017

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Head Football Coach Mike Sanford and his WKU coaching staff welcomed 23 new members to the Hilltopper family on Wednesday during National Signing Day, the unofficial holiday of college football recruiting across America.

Sanford, who was announced as WKU’s 20th head coach on Dec. 14, quickly but diligently built the class of 2017, or “#ThePursuit17” as the program calls it.

“The Pursuit was definitely aptly named for the last 28 days since our staff reported on Jan. 3,” Sanford said. “It’s something that we wanted to set a tone for every aspect of our program. We wanted to pursue the best players that fit Western Kentucky, and most importantly, fit our vision for this program going forward. The one thing we knew when we got here was we were going to get the best 23 to 25 players to populate this recruiting class that would fit what we were looking for going forward.”

The top goal on Sanford’s board for WKU is to graduate every player on the roster. In keeping with that mantra, the combined cumulative GPA of all 23 signees is a 3.04, and 16 of the 23 signees also served as captains on the previous teams.

It was also important for Sanford and company to squeeze a year of relationship-building into less than a month, something the head coach thought the Hilltoppers excelled at to build this signing class.

“I think we effectively built those relationships, and more important is the fact that those players bought into the vision and bought into everything this university and this program have to offer,” Sanford said.

“We feel like we got the 23 best players to fit this roster and to buy into the vision we have as a new coaching staff.”

By position, WKU signed 12 offensive players, 10 defensive players and one specialist long snapper. On offense, the Hilltoppers added four offensive linemen, three tight ends, two running backs, two wide receivers and a quarterback. Defensively, WKU added four defensive backs, four defensive linemen and three linebackers.

A complete list of signees with biographical information is attached.
Opening statement...
“The Pursuit was definitely aptly named for really the last 27, 28 days since our staff reported on the night of January 3rd. It was something that we wanted to set a tone for every aspect of our program. We are going to pursue the best players that fit Western Kentucky and most importantly fit our vision for this program going forward. It’s certainly understood that we would have some shoes to fill, in terms of recruits who had been committed to preexisting relationships with previous coaches was not a surprise to me whatsoever. At certain times I was ready to send out a tweet like Aaron Rodgers with the R-E-L-A-X as players were decommitting. But the one thing that we knew when we took this job was we were going to get the best 20 to 25 players to populate this recruiting class.”

On the outlook of completing the 2017 Class...
“We will have two spots open, which was by design. From a roster management standpoint, spring football is going to create some movement in and of itself. We all understand nowadays with the graduate transfer rule - which has been a hot topic in recent years - that we wanted to leave some wiggle room. But we do really want to build this program from high school athletes, then fortifying our roster with junior college players and potential fifth-year transfers.”

On having less than a month to build the 2017 Class...
“When you have to jam-pack what really should be a full year of relationship-building into 3.5 weeks - and in some instances less than two weeks - you don’t have the depth of relationships to know exactly what’s going to happen on Wednesday, February 1st. But I think we effectively built those relationships, and more importantly is the fact that those players bought into the vision and bought into everything this university and this program have to offer. We feel like we got the 23 best players to fit this roster and to buy into the vision we have as a new coaching staff.”

On the state of Georgia being well-represented...
“Coach Lindsey was a homerun hire for WKU and this staff. His connections in the state of Georgia and the Atlanta area are second-to-none, and I really believe that. I went with him to roughly 15 high schools over the past couple weeks on the road and every single program that I went to, the coaching staffs could not stop raving about Jimmy Lindsey. That was a big part of why he was so attractive for us to bring here from a recruiting standpoint in what I feel like is one of the best football-playing states in the union. I had some preexisting relationships in [Georgia], but nothing to the extent of what Coach Lindsey does. He really is a household name down there and he does things the right way, he’s a great evaluator of talent and he builds great relationships with the coaches and everybody at the school.”

On quarterback signee Davis Shanley...
“Davis (Shanley) really fits the mold of most quarterbacks that I’ve been around offensively within the system at Boise State and Notre Dame. He’s very mobile and that’s one thing about him that I am very excited about. To be able to build to some quarterback driven run game stuff. We are going to make our offense fit our personnel. We are not going to just run the quarterback 10 to 15 times a game because that is just we think we should do.
If the quarterback has the ability and the durability to run the football, we are going to utilize that gift. The other thing I learned about Davis Shanley was when I did my in-home visit with him. Everything was going well, but I felt like at times he was a bit standoff and rough around the edges personality wise. It didn’t really all click for me about who Davis is until he challenged me to a ping-pong game. So we went down to the basement and played ping-pong and he’s one of the most competitive human beings I’ve ever been around. To have a chance to see him compete, even through the avenue of ping-pong, he beat me 21-8. For his official visit, I got as many points as 11 and that was a big deal for him because he tries to hold everybody under double digits.”
## WKU Hilltopper Football 2017 Signing Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ht.</th>
<th>Wt.</th>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Bailey</td>
<td>6-0</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>LB</td>
<td>Bremen, Ga.</td>
<td>Bremen HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roger Cray*</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td>Lake City, Fla.</td>
<td>Columbia HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mic’Quan Deane</td>
<td>6-4</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>TE</td>
<td>Tulsa, Okla.</td>
<td>Northeastern Oklahoma JC/Memorial HS</td>
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<td>Caleb Etheridge</td>
<td>6-2</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>OL</td>
<td>Forsyth, Ga.</td>
<td>Mary Persons HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaylon George*</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Atlanta, Ga.</td>
<td>Northeastern Oklahoma JC/N. Clayton HS</td>
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<td>Juwan Jones</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>LB</td>
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<td>Lanier HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carson Jordan*</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Poplarville, Miss.</td>
<td>Mississippi Gulf Coast CC/Hancock HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antwon Kincaide</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td>Valdosta, Ga.</td>
<td>Valdosta HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kris Leach</td>
<td>6-6</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>TE</td>
<td>Bealeton, Va.</td>
<td>Liberty HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeAngelo Malone</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Ellenwood, Ga.</td>
<td>Cedar Grove HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calder Maria</td>
<td>6-4</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Jonesboro, Ga.</td>
<td>Jonesboro HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan Meredith*</td>
<td>6-3</td>
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<td>OL</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
<td>Bowling Green HS</td>
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<td>Preston Mixon</td>
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<td>Jefferson Davis HS</td>
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<td>Jakairi Moses</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>RB</td>
<td>Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.</td>
<td>William T. Dwyer HS</td>
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<td>Ben Reeder</td>
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<td>210</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Greenville, S.C.</td>
<td>J L Mann HS</td>
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<td>Latheron Rodgers-Anderson</td>
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<td>DB</td>
<td>Columbia, S.C.</td>
<td>Ridge View HS</td>
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<td>Dionte Ruffin</td>
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<td>DB</td>
<td>Dallas, Ga.</td>
<td>Paulding County HS</td>
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<td>Josh Samuel</td>
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<td>RB</td>
<td>Greenville, S.C.</td>
<td>Central Gwinnett HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Davis Shanley</td>
<td>6-2</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>QB</td>
<td>Duluth, Ga.</td>
<td>South Forsyth HS</td>
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<td>Jacquez Sloan</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>WR</td>
<td>Atlanta, Ga.</td>
<td>Grady HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cole Spencer</td>
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<td>285</td>
<td>OL</td>
<td>Louisville, Ky.</td>
<td>Trinity HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven Witchoskey</td>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>TE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tariq Young*</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>WR</td>
<td>Lakeland, Fla.</td>
<td>Lakeland HS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - indicates student-athlete is already enrolled at WKU
Kyle Bailey
6-0, 200, Linebacker
Bremen HS (Bremen, Ga.)

Kyle Bailey comes to The Hill following an outstanding prep career at Bremen High School for coach Davis Russell. A two-way player and three-year starter for the Blue Devils, Bailey was a standout linebacker and running back and rushed for more than 1,700 yards, including a school-record 307 yards against Adairville, as a senior to earn Offensive Player of the Year for region 6-AAA from the Atlanta Journal Constitution while the Georgia Sports Writers Association named Bailey to the Class 3-A All-State Second Team as a running back. Bailey registered 81 tackles including 14 tackles for loss from his linebacker position as a senior and is a three-star prospect in the 247Sports composite rankings.

Roger Cray
5-10, 170, Defensive Back
Columbia HS (Lake City, Fla.)

Roger Cray joins the Hilltoppers in January after a standout prep career at Columbia High School for coach Brian Allen. An exciting secondary prospect from Lake City, Fla., Cray prepped at the same high school as recently-graduated Hilltopper Shaquille Johnson. Cray competed on the varsity squad in all four years of high school football and ranks in the top 250 nationally (217) at cornerback. Cray is a two-star prospect in the 247Sports composite ranking and was an Associated Press All-State 7A first team member on defense, Florida’s highest division.

Mik’Quan Deane
6-4, 230, Tight End
Northeastern Oklahoma A&M/Memorial HS (Tulsa, Okla.)

Mik’Quan Deane comes to The Hill after a junior college career at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M. As a sophomore at NEO, the 6-foot-4, 230 lbs., Deane hauled in 22 passes for 322 yards and four touchdowns. His freshman season, Deane tallied 14 catches, 127 yards and three touchdowns. Deane is rated the No. 4 junior college tight end nationally by 247sports.com and No. 67 overall in the JUCO rankings. Deane is a consensus top-100 JUCO recruit across all major recruiting services.

Caleb Etheridge
6-2, 290, Offensive Line
Mary Persons HS (Forsyth, Ga.)

Caleb Etheridge becomes a Hilltopper by way of Mary Persons High School where he helped anchor the offensive front for coach Brian Nelson. Etheridge, a Georgia Sports Writers Association All-State first team member in Class 4-A, led his team to a semifinal showing in the 2016 Georgia High School Association Class AAAA Playoffs before losing to eventual state champion Cartersville. Behind Etheridge, Mary Persons ranked sixth in all of Georgia’s Class 4A in total rushing, tallying 2,965 total yards and eighth overall in yards per game at 228.1. The Bulldogs averaged 351.7 total yards per game, also good for eighth in the classification out of 43 schools. Etheridge is a two-star prospect in the 247Sports composite rankings.
Jaylon George
6-3, 270, Defensive Line
Northeastern Oklahoma A&M/North Clayton HS (Atlanta, Ga.)

Jaylon George comes to WKU after two seasons at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M. A 6-3, 260-pound lineman who prepped at North Clayton High School in Atlanta, George was third on the Golden Norsemen with 77 tackles and 9.5 sacks, while adding a team-best 12 tackles for loss in his redshirt freshman season. George had multiple sacks in five contests and multiple tackles for loss in three, and forced three fumbles. For his performance over the course of the 10-game season, he was named Honorable Mention All-SWJC Conference. George was given a 79 overall rating by 247Sports, which ranks him as the No. 23 defensive lineman in this transfer class.

Juwuan Jones
6-3, 235, Linebacker
Lanier HS (Sugar Hill, Ga.)

Juwuan Jones joins the program after an all-state career at Lanier High School for coach Korey Mobbs. A first team all-state selection in Georgia’s 6A classification by the Georgia Sports Writers Association, Jones built a legacy at Lanier with 136 tackles, 15 tackles for loss and three sacks, as a senior. During his junior season, Jones tallied 120 tackles including six for loss to earned second team all-state honors from the Associated Press. Jones helped his Longhorns to an appearance in the GHSA playoffs each of the past three seasons. A three-star recruit in the 247Sports composite rankings, Jones is the No. 29 inside linebacker nationally by Rivals.com and No. 7 in the state of Georgia by Scout.com.

Carson Jordan
6-3, 265, Defensive Line
Mississippi Gulf Coast CC/Hancock HS (Poplarville, Miss.)

Carson Jordan comes to WKU after two seasons at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. Jordan improved from 22 tackles in his freshman season to 46 as a sophomore, while adding two sacks and five tackles for loss for the Bulldogs, including at least one takedown behind the line of scrimmage in four consecutive games. The 6-3, 265-pound defensive end earned All-MACJC South Division Second Team honors in 2016. A Poplarville, Miss., native, Jordan played for head coach Rocky Gaudin at Hancock High School, where he accumulated 90 tackles, four sacks and nine tackles for loss as a senior.

Antwon Kincade
5-11, 190, Defensive Back
Valdosta HS (Valdosta, Ga.)

Antwon Kincade brings a Georgia 6A State Championship to The Hill after his Valdosta Wildcats won the 2016 Georgia High School Association championship this past season. Kincade produced a first team all-state season for coach Alan Rodemaker as the Wildcats went 14-2. Kincade tallied 90 total tackles (73 solo) as a senior. Kincade is a two-star rated prospect by both Scout.com and Rivals.com.
Kris Leach  
6-6, 225, Tight End  
Liberty HS (Bealeton, Va.)

Kris Leach prepped at Liberty High School for coach Sean Finnerty and comes to The Hill after a standout Virginia prep career. Leach picked up All-Region 4A honorable mention honors from the *Northern Virginia Daily* as well as All-Conference 22 first team honors at tight end as voted on by the coaches in Conference 22.

DeAngelo Malone  
6-3, 210, Defensive Line  
Cedar Grove HS (Ellenwood, Ga.)

DeAngelo Malone brings a state championship from the Georgia High School Association’s 3A division to The Hill after spending his prep career at Cedar Grove HS under coach Jermaine Smith. Malone racked up 49 tackles, including eight tackles for loss his senior year. He helped the Saints to a 13-2 record and GHSA 3A state title as they took down Greater Atlanta Christian, 30-19. As a senior, Malone picked up Georgia Sports Writer Association All-State first team honors as a defensive lineman as well as All-Metro honors from the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. Malone is a three-star prospect in the 247Sports composite rankings and a top-200 player in the state of Georgia by the service.

Calder Marria, Jr.  
6-4, 225, Defensive Line  
Jonesboro HS (Jonesboro, Ga.)

Calder Marria, Jr., comes to The Hill via Jonesboro High School where he played under coach De’Timothy Floyd. Marria picked up All-Region 4 6A honors as a senior at defensive line for his play on the field which included 22 tackles for loss, two sacks and a pair of pass breakups by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. A two-sport star, including basketball, Marria, is a consensus three-star prospect across all major recruiting services and the No. 97 player out of Georgia for the 2017 class by 247Sports.

Jordan Meredith  
6-3, 270, Offensive Line  
Bowling Green HS (Bowling Green, Ky.)

Jordan Meredith joins the signing class of 2017 after joining the team for the 2016 seasons as a blueshirt. Meredith, who prepped at Bowling Green High School for coach Kevin Wallace, won a 2015 KHSAA 5A State Championship with the Purples. That season, the Purples finished with the No. 3 scoring offense in 5A (38.3 points per game) and the No. 4 passing offense at 194 yards per game as they went 14-1 on the year. Meredith was a two-star prospect in the 247Sports composite ratings and the No. 22 prospect in Kentucky.
Preston Mixon  
6-4, 295, Offensive Line  
Jefferson Davis HS (Montgomery, Ala.)

Preston Mixon comes to The Hill via Jefferson Davis High School where he played for coach Lee Carter. A participant in the prestigious Alabama-Mississippi All-Star game on Dec. 10 in his hometown of Montgomery, Ala., Mixon helped his offense average 310 yards of total offense per game over an 11-game season and helped to anchor an offensive front which produced a pair of 400-yard rushers. Mixon is ranked as a three-star prospect by 247sports.com and ESPN, a two-star by Rivals.com and Scout.com and a top-170 offensive tackle nationally and top-100 player in the state of Alabama.

Jakairi Moses  
5-9, 185, Running Back  
William T. Dwyer HS (Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.)

Jakairi Moses prepped at William T. Dwyer High School under coach Jack Daniels. During his junior year campaign, he posted 144 carries, 1,073 yards and 10 touchdowns while averaging 119.2 yards per game. Moses his senior year tallied 64 carries, 621 yards and seven touchdowns. The all-purpose back also racked up 203 receiving yards and two receiving touchdowns out of the backfield in his career for the Gators. Moses is rated a two-star on 247sports.com, scout.com and rivals.com. He is considered the 133rd-best running back in the country and the 374th-best overall prospect in the state of Florida. Moses holds a 3.5 cumulative GPA as a senior.

Ben Reeder  
6-2, 210, Long Snapper  
J. L. Mann HS (Greenville, S.C.)

Ben Reeder, the nation’s top rated long snapper, will come to The Hill with a decorated prep career playing for coach Brian Strickland at J. L. Mann High School. Rated as the nation’s best by ProKicker.com and a five-star snapper by Kohl’s, a four-year letterwinner and starter played in over 35 games for the Patriots. Reeder played in the annual Carolina Shrine Bowl between the all-star teams of North and South Carolina on Dec. 15 in Spartanburg, S.C. The longsnapper also earned a spot on the Blue-Grey All-American team playing in the game on Jan. 14 in Jacksonville, Fla. Reeder finished third at the Kohl’s invitation-only 2016 National Scholarship Showcase Camp and won the organization’s Spring Southern Showcase. He carries a 4.25 cumulative GPA to WKU.

Latheron Rogers-Anderson  
6-1, 190, Defensive Back  
Ridgeview HS (Columbia, S.C.)

Latheron Rogers-Anderson comes to The Hill after a tremendous dual-role senior season at Ridgeview High School for coach Perry Parks. He finished his season for the Blazers with 869 rushing yards and 11 touchdowns to go along with 55 tackles and two interceptions culminating in an invitation to the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives North-South Bowl. Rogers-Anderson helped his team to a second round appearance in the South Carolina Class 4A playoffs and earned All-Region 3 4A honors in the process. A three-star prospect in the 247Sports composite rankings, Rogers-Anderson is ranked as the No. 25 player in the state by 247Sports and the No. 4 safety in the state by Scout.com.
Dionte Ruffin  
6-0, 180, Defensive Back  
Paulding County HS (Dallas, Ga.)

Dionte Ruffin prepped at Paulding County High School for coach Van Spence. The Georgia native and two-way player racked up 58 tackles (32 solo), one interception and three passes deflected at cornerback. On the other side of the ball, Ruffin tallied 17 catches for 260 yards and one touchdown at receiver. He was named the 5A All-Purpose Player of the Year as a senior, building off a junior season which included 49 tackles, four interceptions and six pass breakups to go along with a 20.8 kickoff return average. Ruffin is rated a two-star prospect on 247Sports.com and Rivals.com.

Josh Samuel  
5-11, 200, Running Back  
Central Gwinnett HS (Greenville, S.C.)

Josh Samuel spent his prep career at Central Gwinnett High School under coach Todd Wofford. As a senior, Samuel tallied 972 rushing yards and seven rushing touchdowns, including a performance of 75 rushing yards, 102 receiving yards and a touchdown against powerhouse Norcross (11-1). Samuel averaged 123.4 all-purpose yards a game and 5.7 yards per carry. Samuel is ranked as a three-star on 247ports.com and Scout.com and a two-star on Rivals.com. He is considered the 101st-best running back in the country and the 184th-best overall prospect in the state of Georgia.

Davis Shanley  
6-2, 190, Quarterback  
South Forsyth HS (Duluth, Ga.)

Quarterback Davis Shanley enjoyed a standout career at South Forsyth High School for coach Jeff Arnette. A quarterback with the ability to beat teams throwing and running, Shanley threw for 1,669 yards and rushed for 471 during his senior season. Over a two-year career, Shanley tallied 4,017 passing yards on 277 of 460 attempts (60.2 percent) and 39 touchdown passes and added 1,094 yards on the ground with 15 rushing scores. As a junior, he was named the Forsyth County News Offensive Player of the Year. Shanley helped lead his team to the GHSA 7A playoffs as a senior in Georgia’s largest division. He is a two-star prospect in the 247Sports composite rankings and the No. 101-ranked pro-style quarterback in the nation.

Jacquez Sloan  
5-11, 165, Wide Receiver  
Grady HS (Atlanta, Ga.)

Jacquez Sloan prepped at Grady High School in Atlanta for coach Earthwind Moreland. The versatile athlete tallied 103 carries, 610 yards and three touchdowns at the running back position his sophomore and junior seasons, before transitioning to receiver his senior year where he racked up 62 catches, 1,252 yards and 13 touchdowns. For his efforts at wideout this past fall, Sloan earned first team all-state by the Georgia Sports Writers Association. Sloan also led the Knights to a 10-2 record and a second round showing in the GHSA 5-A playoffs. He is a two-star on 247sports.com and is the 178th-best athlete in the country.
Cole Spencer
6-4, 285, Offensive Line
Trinity HS (Louisville, Ky.)

Cole Spencer spent his prep career at Trinity High School under coach Bob Beatty. As a senior, Spencer led the Shamrocks to a KHSAA 6-A state title going 15-0 on the year. Spencer was a three-year letterwinner while contributing to the team his sophomore year in 2014 as Trinity won the state title. Spencer picked up All-State second team honors from the Courier-Journal as a senior. His father and mother both played tennis at the University of Louisville while his aunt was a member of WKU’s women’s basketball team when the Lady Toppers made their run to the Final Four in 1992.

Steven Witchoskey
6-3, 240, Tight End
Durant HS (Plant City, Fla.)

Steven Witchoskey prepped at Durant High School under coach Michael Gottman. Witchoskey led the Panthers to an 8-3 record this past fall. The Florida native is considered a two-star prospect according to 247sports.com, scout.com and rivals.com and is ranked as the 184th-best athlete in the country and the 380th-best overall prospect in the state of Florida. Over his Christmas break during his senior year in high school, Witchoskey went on a mission trip to Haiti, particularly in areas impacted by natural disaster, to aide in the rebuilding efforts.

Tariq Young
5-11, 185, Wide Receiver
Lakeland HS (Lakeland, Fla.)

Tariq Young joins the Hilltoppers as a part of the class of 2017 after an All-State career at Lakeland High School for coach Bill Castle. As a senior, Young caught 35 passes for 637 yards and six touchdowns. He also returned 12 punts for 148 yards and a pair of touchdowns. Young was named to the Associated Press All-State second team on offense in Florida’s highest division, 7A. A three-star prospect, Young ranks in the top 250 nationally (239) at wide receiver, as well as top 250 in the state of Florida (233).
MCCOLLUM GRANTED RELEASE TO TRANSFER

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — T.J. McCollum requested and was granted his release to transfer from WKU. McCollum received his undergraduate degree from Western Kentucky University in December. Under the terms of his release, McCollum can transfer to any school in the country outside of schools on WKU’s 2017 schedule or a Conference USA member, per league rules.
LAMP; TAYLOR INVITED TO 2017 NFL SCOUTING COMBINE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Former Hilltopper All-Americans and two-time Conference USA Champions Forrest Lamp and Taywan Taylor will represent WKU at the 2017 NFL Scouting Combine, held at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Feb. 28-March 6, the National Football League announced on Wednesday. The official invitation list, which includes 330 of the nation’s top NFL prospects, features a pair of Hilltoppers for the second consecutive season as former quarterback Brandon Doughty (Miami Dolphins, 7th round) and Tyler Higbee (LA Rams, 4th round) both attended the event in 2016 and went on to be drafted into the NFL. They are both the first players in school history to attend the combine from their position group.

Both Taylor and Lamp attended the nation’s top all-star game last month, the Reese’s Senior Bowl, and while Lamp saw his week cut short due to injury, both former Hilltoppers came away having impressed scouts.

NFLNetwork.com features scouting profiles on both Hilltoppers where Lamp is projected to be an instant starter at the next level with a 6.11 grade. Taylor’s grade of 5.66 puts him in the upper echelon of the groups where the scouts say he has a “chance to become an NFL starter.”

According to Lance Zierlein of NFL Network, Lamp “has the athleticism to handle athletic interior rushers while being able to fit into diverse rushing attacks that ask more from the guards and centers. His ability to potentially line up at tackle, guard or center will only increase his value.”

On Taylor, Zierlein adds, “(Taylor has a) high floor with the potential to be an above-average slot receiver in an offense that recognizes his flexibility.”

The duo are two of 11 players from C-USA invited to the combine, and WKU is one of three league schools to have multiple representatives at the combine (LA Tech, UTEP). Lamp is the highest rated player from C-USA by Zierlein while Taylor is third. Lamp is also Zierlein’s second-highest rated offensive lineman overall at 6.11, just behind Wisconsin’s Ryan Ramczyk (6.2).

On-field workouts for the offensive line begin on Friday, March 3, with the bench press set for Thursday. For wide receivers, on-field workouts are set for Saturday, March 4.

WKU’s NFL Scouting Combine Participants (Year)

- OL Forrest Lamp (2017)
- WR Taywan Taylor (2017)
- QB Brandon Doughty (2016)
- TE Tyler Higbee (2016)
- RB Antonio Andrews (2014)
- DB Jonathan Dowling (2014)
- LB Andrew Jackson (2014)
- DL Quanterus Smith (2013)
- DB Mel Mitchell (2002)
- DB Bobby Sippio (2002)
HILLTOPPERS SET TO OPEN SPRING PRACTICE MARCH 23; ALL PRACTICES OPEN

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Though the pursuit of a third consecutive Conference USA championship is already underway in the weight room, the 2017 WKU Hilltoppers will hit the field for the first time under head coach Mike Sanford on Thursday, March 23 when they begin spring practices.

All 14 practices lead up to the annual Red and White Spring Game, set for April 22 at 3 p.m., and all practices are open to the public. Admission and parking to the spring game will be free and more details will be announced soon.

The Hilltoppers enter 2017 with the return of C-USA Newcomer of the Year, quarterback Mike White, as well as veteran offensive linemen Brandon Ray and Dennis Edwards to lead the charge up front for offensive coordinator Junior Adams. Defensively, three-year starters Derik Overstreet and Marcus Ward, as well as senior cornerbacks DeAndre Simmons and Joe Brown return to lead new defensive coordinator Clayton White’s defense.

In all, the Hilltoppers return 10 starters (four offense, six defense) from last season’s 2016 Boca Raton Bowl championship team, the team’s third consecutive bowl championship. But, the Red and White will need a strong spring to find new starters at key positions. Receivers Lucky Jackson and Nacarius Fant return as budding stars on the outside while All-Freshman team running back Quinton Baker enters his sophomore campaign. That trio, along with numerous other potential stars, will need to carry the load to replace the top two receivers in school history in Taywan Taylor and Nicholas Norris, and the school’s all-time leader in touchdowns scored, Anthony Wales (tied with Willie Taggart).

Defensively, both starting corners return as well as rising senior defensive end Tanner Reeves to complement Overstreet, and junior college products Jaylon George and Carson Jordan will compete with other returning Hilltoppers to fill a spot vacated on the interior defensive line by Omarius Bryant, an All-Conference USA performer a season ago.

The Hilltoppers will practice from approximately 4-6 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday with Friday practices running from 3:30-5:30 p.m.

COMPLETE SCHEDULE
1. Thursday, March 23
2. Friday, March 24
3. Tuesday, March 28
4. Thursday, March 30
5. Friday, March 31
6. Tuesday, April 4
7. Thursday, April 6
8. Friday, April 7
9. Tuesday, April 11
10. Thursday, April 13
11. Friday, April 14
12. Tuesday, April 18
13. Thursday, April 20
14. Friday, April 21
15. Saturday, April 22 (Red and White Spring Game – 3 p.m.)
2017 WKU Football Spring Practice Schedule

Media Contact: Kyle Neaves, Associate AD/Athletic Communications • Kyle.Neaves@wku.edu • (228) 424-6921 • @KyleNeavesWKU
Secondary Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski, Assistant Director of Media Relations • Bryan.Fyalkowski@wku.edu • (412) 335-2675 • @fyalkowski

1. Thursday, March 23
2. Friday, March 24

• Monday, March 27 – Pro Day
3. Tuesday, March 28
4. Thursday, March 30
5. Friday, March 31

6. Tuesday, April 4
7. Thursday, April 6
8. Friday, April 7

9. Tuesday, April 11
10. Thursday, April 13
11. Friday, April 14

12. Tuesday, April 18
13. Thursday, April 20
14. Friday, April 21

15. Saturday, April 22 – SPRING GAME, 3 p.m. (Normal post-game availability)

   All Tues./Thurs. practices will be from 4-6 p.m. Friday practices are 3:30-5:30.
   Times are subject to change.
   All practices are open to the public and will be held inside Houchens-Smith Stadium.

MEDIA POLICIES FOR SPRING PRACTICES
Interviews with players and coaches will be done by request only. Please e-mail or text Kyle Neaves by 2 p.m. on the day of practice to confirm your request.

While all practices are open, video and photography by media members is allowed for the stretch and individual periods only and should only be shot from the field level on the East side of Smith Stadium unless escorted by a member of the WKU Media Relations staff. Please enter Houchens-Smith Stadium from the concourse on the East side.

MEDIA POLICIES FOR PRO DAY – MARCH 27
WKU will host a Pro Day on Monday, March 27. Media members are invited to attend and view any of the on-field activities, expected to begin at roughly 10 a.m. Interviews can be arranged as players complete their workouts for the day. If you are interested in having a camera inside the facility, please contact Kyle Neaves directly.
LONGTIME HILTOPPER FOOTBALL COACH BUTCH GILBERT PASSES AWAY AT 87

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Lawrence “Butch” Gilbert, who spent the bulk of his adult life as a part of the football program at Western Kentucky University, passed away early Monday at the age of 87.

After an outstanding career in the area high school coaching ranks, Gilbert returned to his alma mater as an assistant on head coach Jimmy Feix’ staff in 1969. He spent 15 seasons with Feix, a former teammate of his on The Hill, coaching the WKU offensive line. In 1973, he was promoted to assistant head coach and offensive coordinator, a position he held through 1983.

Following Feix’ retirement from coaching after the 1983 season, Gilbert spent 1984 as an administrative aide and running backs coach for new head coach Dave Roberts before retiring from coaching. When Jack Harbaugh took over the Topper coaching reins in 1989, Gilbert came out of retirement and spent two seasons on the football staff, working primarily with the kickers and special teams.

Even in retirement in later years, Gilbert continued to help out whenever called upon. He was a fixture on the Hilltopper football scene for large parts of eight decades — as a player in the late 1940s and early 1950s; a coach in the late 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s and the early 1990s; and as a treasured asset the rest of his life.

As a high school athlete, Gilbert lettered three times in both football (as an offensive lineman and linebacker) and baseball (as a pitcher, first baseman and outfielder) at Bowling Green High School. As a senior in 1946, he captained the football team, earning all-conference and honorable mention all-state honors. On the diamond, he helped lead the Purples to appearances in three state tournaments.

After high school graduation in 1947, Gilbert moved three blocks up the street to enroll at WKU, where he earned four letters in football (1948-49-50-51), captaining the Hilltoppers as a senior All-Ohio Valley Conference center in ‘51. His 1950 club went 6-2-2 and took runner-up honors in the OVC. Included in those six victories was a 14-13 triumph over Eastern Kentucky in the WKU Homecoming Game. It was Gilbert’s extra point kick (following a long touchdown pass from Jimmy Feix to Max Stevens) in the final seconds that proved to be the winning point.

After graduation in 1952, Gilbert served stints as an assistant coach at Russellville (1952-53) and Bowling Green (1953-57) high schools before being named head coach at Campbellsville High School where he spent four years (1957-63). He then moved on to Glasgow High School where he was the Scotties’ head coach for six seasons (1963-69) before joining Feix’ staff at WKU in 1969. Overall, his CHS and GHS clubs were 67-47-9.

Eleven of the 18 Hilltopper teams he coached posted winning seasons (with two .500 years and only five below .500), amassing 109 victories against 67 losses and five ties, a 62 percent winning percentage. Twelve of his offensive linemen earned All-OVC honors and three — David Carter (1976), Chip Carpenter (‘77) and Pete Walters (‘80) were honored as All-Americans.

Gilbert is survived by his wife, Daphna (Gabbard), and four children, two sons (Larry and Steve) and two daughters (Leigh and Kelli).

Funeral arrangements are incomplete as of this time and will be announced as soon as they are available.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / March 2, 2017
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Complete Combine Schedule
HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL ON FULL DISPLAY AT 2017 NFL SCOUTING COMBINE
INDIANAPOLIS — As media interviews and preliminary testing begins at the 2017 NFL Scouting Combine, numerous players with WKU connections found themselves as the center of attention on Thursday in Indianapolis.

Coverage of the Combine continues around the clock on NFL Network with on-field workouts beginning for offensive linemen on Friday and for wide receivers on Saturday.

Former All-Americans Forrest Lamp and Taywan Taylor are drawing the most attention as two prospects actively participating in this year’s combine — the second consecutive season for the Hilltoppers to send multiple representatives to the event. However, former stars Tyler Higbee (Los Angeles Rams) and George Fant (Seattle Seahawks) also made waves as their head coaches addressed the media during the round of interviews.

For Lamp, Thursday including interviews and the bench press where he put up 34 reps, the second-most among all offensive linemen. He has continued to see his name climb up the draft boards with many pundits sliding the four-year starter into the first round.

“I think I’m one of the top offensive linemen (here at the combine). Otherwise, I wouldn’t be here,” Lamp said during his media session. “My ability is what got me here. I don’t watch film on other offensive linemen, so I don’t know if I’m the top guy or the 10th-best guy, but I’m here for a reason. I’m versatile and athletic, and teams see me as a center, guard and tackle.”

Taylor, who was featured in an extensive feature article from Bleacher Report, will meet with the media on Friday and celebrated his birthday ahead of one of the biggest job interviews of his life.

“Taylor is often slow, then fast and then faster,” the article says. “His movements can be sudden and jarring, with speeds changing quickly and at a precise, intricately timed moment.”

Higbee enters his sophomore campaign in Los Angeles under new head coach Sean McVay who, along with general manager Les Snead, spoke highly of his potential at the Combine. According to reports across Twitter during McVay’s media session, the first-year head coach said his offense will use the tight end in multiple ways and has been complimentary of Higbee so far. Snead added that Rams fans should “expect big things from Tyler Higbee.”

Fant’s unique story of basketball star turned starting left tackle had some questioning whether Seattle was going to continue to move forward with the former Hilltopper protecting Russell Wilson’s blind side. On Thursday, head coach Pete Carroll said Fant “should grow more than anybody could possibly grow,” this offseason, speaking to Fant’s potential to develop into an elite protector on the offensive front.
HILLTOPPERS ADD AUBURN TO 2022 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Football has added the Auburn Tigers to its 2022 schedule, set to be played at Jordan-Hare Stadium in Auburn, the program announced today. The game, set for Sept. 24, 2022, will be a single game between the two teams who last played in 2005. There have been just two games between the schools in program history, the other coming in 2003. The Hilltoppers are 0-2 against Auburn and have not played since WKU’s move up to the FBS level.

“It is great for WKU to add an opponent of Auburn’s caliber and tradition to our future non-conference football schedule,” said Director of Athletics Todd Stewart. “The goal of our football program in scheduling is to play appealing regional opponents that enable our fans to travel to the game and see us compete against the best competition in the country. Traveling to play a prominent Auburn program in a fantastic setting will be exciting for everyone associated with our program.”

With the addition of the Tigers in 2022, the Hilltoppers have at least one game scheduled against an opponent from the Southeastern Conference, Big Ten Conference or Atlantic Coast Conference each of the next six years. Since 2012, WKU has picked up three victories over SEC opponents. WKU also has future non-conference games scheduled with Illinois, Vanderbilt, Wisconsin, Louisville and Indiana and now has three of four non-conference games scheduled for the 2022 season.

The Hilltoppers enter the 2017 season under first year head coach Mike Sanford as reigning back-to-back Conference USA Champions and return the C-USA Newcomer of the Year in quarterback Mike White as well as 10 starters. WKU opens spring practices on March 23 and the 2017 at home on Sept. 2 against Eastern Kentucky.
2017 WKU FOOTBALL SPRING PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Media Contact: Kyle Neaves, Associate AD/Athletic Communications • Kyle.Neaves@wku.edu • (228) 424-6921 • @KyleNeavesWKU
Secondary Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski, Assistant Director of Media Relations • Bryan.Fyalkowski@wku.edu • (412) 335-2675 • @fyalkowski

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WKU Football  
Press Conference Quotes  
March 21, 2017

Head Coach Mike Sanford

Opening statement...
“We are really at an exciting time for myself, personally, but more importantly for these players. It has been a long, grueling and challenging offseason. I’m really, really excited about where our team is right now, but even more than that, I’m just excited for football. If there’s one thing that I’ve learned about this roster, it’s that these players love when the football is out there. Anything that has to do with playing the game of football and competing, is when you see the lights go on, unlike many teams that I’ve had a chance to be a part of.”

On what spring ball entails...
“Spring ball for us is going to be a time for us for a lot of different things. We want to accomplish multiple facets from a program standpoint. No. 1, is we really want to have a chance to continue to cultivate that love of football. The other part is that we are going to be implementing new schemes. We want to do a great job of teaching over the four to five weeks and integrate some meeting times and film study as part of our offseason program. The last part is that we’ve gotten to know these players from a personality and academic standpoint, so now we want to get to know them as football players.”

On getting to know quarterback Mike White ...
“He’s been really good. The number one thing that Mike (White) did was that he bought into the body transformation. If you look at last year’s draft, just at the quarterback position, Jared Goff was the first pick in the draft and was not built durably compared to Dak Prescott. The guy that was working as an assistant strength coach at Mississippi State was Thomas Stallworth. At the quarterback position, this game is not meant for the underdeveloped. You have to be durable and strong in the weight room, and that’s what Mike has done this offseason. He was one of our all-star performers in the weight room for body transformation, he’s bought into that. And honestly, from the football side of it being a leader, it comes so naturally to him. But it’s the offseason body transformation that I’ve been impressed with.”

QB Mike White

On the offensive line...
“We lost a great group of guys last year and a bunch of leaders, but we also had some young veterans you could say in Dennis (Edwards) and Brandon (Ray). They have a lot of starts under their belts and there are other veterans now, too. People like Matt Nord and Jimmie Sims have seen quality playing time. We’ll find a center, no doubt in my mind between Tyler Camp and Cullen Reynolds.”

On what he would like to see from young guys in the coming weeks...
“Going through the offseason you hear from people that you lost a lot of guys and how are you going to replace it. For us, it is just a next man up mentality. From a receiver standpoint, you have the Lucky Jackson’s, the Quin Jernigan’s who have seen the field before, but don’t have the production because they had Taywan Taylor and Nicholas Norris in front of them. But it is all about stepping up and we believe in all of our guys.”
DL Derik Overstreet

On what type of opportunity the young guys have to impress the new coaches...
“Anytime that there is a new staff that comes in, there’s always an opportunity to get more playing time. The depth chart completely starts over and it’s a chance for anybody to get in, especially right now. Everybody will get a chance to show what they have. If somebody felt like they didn’t get a chance last year, they will now.”

On what Leon Allen brings to the table...
“Just being here my freshman year and seeing what he could do, he set records that year, so to have him come off of an injury and still be leading in all of the drills is going to be really good for the team.”
HILLTOPPERS OPEN FIRST SPRING OF THE MIKE SANFORD ERA

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — The Mike Sanford Era is officially underway on The Hill as WKU opened its first spring under the first year head coach on Thursday under cool skies on the turf inside Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium.

“It was a great day. It was great to be back on the grass in an unbelievable environment to do it in with great weather,” Sanford said. “This was the very first time they’ve gone through our practices with that style and tempo. I don’t know what the practices were like before, but they were certainly pretty good because these guys came out, bought in and flew around.”

Sanford has been complimentary of the effort the two-time defending C-USA champions have given all winter, and on Thursday, he got to see it in action as senior quarterback Mike White directed a new offense and connected on numerous downfield throws while an athletic secondary made the most of even the tiniest mistakes from the offense to create turnovers.

“If (Mike White) has any rust, it’s just the newness of what he’s doing from a communication standpoint, the newness of what he’s doing from a footwork standpoint in the run game,” Sanford said of his quarterback. “I was very pleased with Mike’s work today. He was out there commanding an offense that he doesn’t necessarily know in and out, but it did appear at times he did.”

The Hilltoppers flew around defensively in Clayton White’s new defensive scheme, preventing WKU’s offense from “striking up the band,” as Sanford has coined it. Under Sanford, whenever the Hilltoppers score big touchdowns on offense, WKU’s fight song will ring out through the speakers in the stadium. When the defense creates a turnover, horns blare to tell everyone in attendance a big play has been made.

WKU returns to the practice field on Friday for their second practice of 14 this spring leading up to the annual Red vs. White Spring Game, set for April 22 at 3 p.m. The Hilltoppers practice each week on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 4:15 – 6:15 p.m. CT and all practices are open to the public.
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Forrest Lamp Post-Pro Day: https://youtu.be/MwQ0SbrRUhk
Keith Brown Post-Pro Day: https://youtu.be/7_AfDngVh24
Photos of Forrest Lamp and Anthony Wales attached. Please credit Steve Roberts/WKU Athletics.

FOOTBALL HOSTS SUCCESSFUL PRO DAY ON MONDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — The winningest senior class of the FBS era at WKU put a cap on their Hilltopper careers on Monday in front of 33 NFL representatives from 26 teams as they worked through the program’s annual pro day on Monday inside Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium. All totaled, 21 former Hilltoppers, including 18 from last season’s Conference USA championship squad worked out in the weight room and on the turf of Feix Field.

“Today was bittersweet,” offensive lineman Forrest Lamp said. “It was the last time I’ll ever be on this field, so it was bittersweet but it was fun. (Pro Day) has grown a lot. I think my freshman year there were maybe 10 or 12 scouts here, so it’s grown a lot, and it’s been awesome.”

While Lamp, a near consensus pick to be selected in the first round, and the school’s all-time leading receiver, Taywan Taylor, validated their position as top NFL prospects following the Senior Bowl and the NFL Scouting Combine, it was the first opportunity for the other Hilltoppers to show what they were capable of.

In the biggest job interview of their lives, they did not disappoint.
Former walk-on turned four-year starter at center Max Halpin opened up the day with 35 repetitions on the bench press, a number which would have ranked No. 1 among all players at the Combine. Wide out Nicholas Norris, who finished behind only Taylor in every major receiving category, helped his own stock with a 10’5” broad jump, a mark that would have put him in the Top 10 at the combine among receivers, and a 37 inch vertical jump, a top five mark.

In the three-cone drill, safety Branden Leston’s 6.65 seconds would have been the top mark among all safeties at the Combine while running back Anthony Wales’ 6.95 seconds would have been in the top five. Leston’s 37 inch vertical was also a top five mark compared in his position group compared to the Combine results.

The former Hilltoppers will now continue their offseason preparations, which may include more private workouts or team visits, as they await the NFL Draft, set for April 27-29 from Philadelphia, Pa.
JUSTIN JOHNSON JOINS WKU FOOTBALL FOR SPRING PRACTICE
BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Hilltopper men’s basketball letterman Justin Johnson will participate with WKU football for the remainder of spring activities with the team, beginning with this afternoon’s practice. Johnson remains an active member of the Hilltopper men’s basketball team and will work out as a tight end this spring on the gridiron.
WKU FB: Sanford Recaps Week Two of Spring Practice, Fri. 3/31/2017

WKU head coach Mike Sanford wrapped up the Hilltoppers’ second week of spring practice today. Video of that availability is below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8j8UobgIXyg
TWO HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL GAMES MOVED TO FRIDAY FOR NATIONAL TELEVISION

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Conference USA announced on Thursday that two WKU football games will move to Friday to accommodate national television broadcasts on CBS Sports Network, at Old Dominion (Oct. 20) and the home finale against rival Middle Tennessee (Nov. 17).

The reigning back-to-back conference champions will host the Blue Raiders at 7 p.m. under the lights of Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium while the kick time at Old Dominion is still to be determined. Additional Conference USA football television exposures through other league television partners, as well as select non-conference road games that will air on other conferences television packages will be released as soon as they are finalized. Kick off times for additional home and away games will also be announced as soon as possible.

The Hilltoppers are in the midst of spring practices under first year head coach Mike Sanford and return the league’s top passer in quarterback Mike White, the reigning C-USA Newcomer of the Year, as well as six starters from C-USA’s top scoring defense a year ago. WKU wraps up the spring season on April 22 with the annual Red vs. White Spring Game, set for 3 p.m., and opens the 2017 season on Sept. 2 at home against Eastern Kentucky.
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Oct. 20 (Friday)</td>
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<td>Oct. 28</td>
<td>Florida Atlantic*</td>
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<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<td>Nov. 17 (Friday)</td>
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<td>Nov. 25</td>
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<td>Miami, Fla.</td>
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Home games in **BOLD** | * Indicates Conference USA game
SANFORD RECAPS END OF WEEK 3; HILLTOPPERS SCRIMMAGE ON FRIDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU closed out week three of spring practices on Friday with a full team scrimmage under cool skies inside Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium.

After putting a sign up in the team room stating, “Playmakers Wanted,” Sanford came away pleased with the effort he saw from the reigning back-to-back Conference USA champions.

“We called it spring game No. 1, just so we could get an opportunity to see if we could find some playmakers,” the first-year head coach said. “I felt like we saw that today. It was a good day for us, offensively, to see who could make some plays. Defensively, they definitely answered that. It was pretty good back and forth today.”

On the back end of defensive coordinator Clayton White’s defense, Drell Greene and AJ Jackson both came away with interceptions and Greene just barely missed out on a second. Sanford has been impressed with the speed and tenacity of that side of the ball through eight practices so far.

“I like where we’re at defensively,” Sanford added. “Coach White and his staff have really gotten those players to buy in to what the scheme is, buy in to what their mentality is when they get on the field. The details are starting to get tightened up, but the effort and the enthusiasm and the way they fly around is maintained. So, the combination of all of that is encouraging.”

The Hilltoppers have six practices remaining ahead of April 22’s Red vs. White Spring Game. Practices are Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and all practices are open to the public.
HOMECOMING DATE SET FOR 2017 FOOTBALL SEASON

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU will host Charlotte for the first time in program history on Oct. 14, and the first-ever matchup between the Conference USA East Division teams has been designated as the 2017 Homecoming game.

Kick off time as well as the theme for Homecoming will be announced at a later date. For the most current information on Homecoming, visit alumni.WKU.edu.

The reigning back-to-back C-USA champions continue to work towards the annual Red vs. White Spring Game, set for April 22 at 3 p.m. inside Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium. Admission, parking and tailgating are all free for the day as head coach Mike Sanford and his Hilltoppers scrimmage for the final time this spring.
WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 14, 2017
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Sanford Post-Practice: https://youtu.be/O0 dcDgYwks

HILLTOPPERS WRAP UP WEEK 4 OF SPRING PRACTICE
BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU wrapped up the fourth week of spring practices on Friday with a 75-play full scrimmage, and with one week of practice remaining, head coach Mike Sanford came away pleased with the play of his defense.

“We wanted to have a chance to see how we’d be able to play in an overtime situation, a two-minute situation, and definitely today, I would give the upper hand to the defense,” Sanford said. “Overall, it really felt like the defense played sound football. They played good situational football.”

Defensive coordinator Clayton White’s scheme has fit the returning personnel of the two-time Conference USA champions well with as many as five seniors starting or expected to see considerable playing time this fall.

“Offensively, the challenge to them is, if you don’t like what you put on tape, you’ve got one more week and opportunity to change it,” Sanford added. “It wasn’t a poor showing from the offense, but it was a good showing from the defense. I thought the ebbs and flows of the scrimmage really favored them.”

WKU has a final week of practice beginning on Tuesday ahead of the Red vs. White Spring Game set for Saturday, April 22 at 3 p.m. Admission, parking and tailgating are all free on campus that afternoon, and fans are encouraged to join the Hilltoppers on the field following the game for a postgame autograph session.
The WKU Spring Equipment Sale will return for 2017 at Saturday’s Red vs. White Spring Game. The sale will open earlier this year and begin at 8 a.m. to accommodate high demand as fans will be able to purchase authentic WKU football game jerseys, including all three colors from WKU’s previous run of jerseys the team wore from 2013-15, cleats and shoes from Under Armour as well as team sideline polos, heavy jackets, and t-shirts. The popular Grab Bag also returns for 2017 where fans can get a Russell Athletic drawstring bag for $25 and take home as much clothing (jerseys excluded) as they can fit inside the bag. The sale will run through the end of the Red vs. White Game on the southeast concourse, near Avenue of Champions. Cash and credit cards will be accepted. Items will not be sold online and cannot be purchased ahead of time.

**COMPLETE PRICING**

- Grab Bag - $25
- Russell Athletic Heavy Jackets - $50
- Open Box Cleats/Shoes - $25
- In-Box Cleats/Shoes - $60
- Game Jerseys - $75

WKU’s Red vs. White Spring Game kicks off at 3 p.m. at Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium on Saturday. The first 1,000 fans will receive a free “Back2Back” red tank top, celebrating WKU’s consecutive Conference USA titles, and the first 2,000 fans will receive “Back2Back” decals.
HILLTOPPERS SET FOR SATURDAY’S RED VS. WHITE SPRING GAME

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — It’s Red vs. White this Saturday on The Hill as first-year head coach Mike Sanford and the two-time Conference USA Champion Hilltoppers wrap up spring practices with their final scrimmage, set for 3 p.m. from Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium.

WKU Athletics will continue to monitor the weather for Saturday and announce any changes as soon as possible via e-mail, social media and on WKUSports.com.

In Sanford’s first spring on The Hill, the program held a spring draft on Monday evening as the coaching staff was split into two, and coordinators from both sides of the ball built their squads. Offensive coordinator Junior Adams will serve as the head coach of the White team, while defensive coordinator Clayton White will serve as head coach of the Red team.

The team will run a full scrimmage on Saturday with the first half clock operating as normal while the second half will have a running clock. At halftime of the spring game, WKU’s 2016 senior class will be honored, and Sanford will also unveil a new game week tradition for the Hilltoppers.

At stake for both teams, the dinner menu for that evening. The winners of Saturday’s game will eat “in the penthouse,” as Sanford has referred to it, where they will dine on steak and seafood at his home. The losers get their pick of hamburgers and hotdogs downstairs.

The first 1,000 fans into the stadium will receive a free red “Back2Back” tank top, commemorating WKU’s consecutive conference titles, and the first 2,000 fans will receive “Back2Back” decals. Parking, admission and tailgating to the game will be free. Tailgating will only be allowed on paved lots around Houchens-Smith Stadium.

Spring Sale

WKU’s spring equipment sale will open at 8 a.m. on the southeast concourse, closest to Avenue of Champions, and run through the duration of the game. Sale items include various WKU t-shirts, polos, jerseys and jackets along with cleats and running shoes. Prices will range from $25 for a clothing grab bag (jerseys excluded) to $75 for jerseys worn by the Hilltoppers from 2013-15. The sale will also include jerseys and apparel from other sport programs including volleyball and baseball.
WHITE TOPS RED, 45-13, IN 2017 SPRING GAME

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — After drafting teams on Monday and putting steak and seafood on the line, the White team defeated the Red team, 45-13, in WKU’s annual Red vs. White Spring Game, the first under head coach Mike Sanford. “There was great production from both sides of the ball,” Sanford said. “Without question, we saw a lot of the same stuff that we’ve seen through the course of camp. I thought the defense, overall, outside of missing a couple fits in the run game – and Quinton Baker was being absolutely freakish as a running back – I thought didn’t allow a ton of explosive plays until later in the game.” Speaking of Baker, the rising sophomore from Ashland, Ky., stole the show as he combined for three big touchdown runs of 38, 47, and 74 yards to cap a monster day on the ground. Through the air, the Hilltoppers saw big plays from their wide receivers as Quin Jernighan, Xavier Lane and Kylen Towner all had gains of 20 yards or more while the newest recipient of a full scholarship, tight end Deon Yelder, also got involved in the explosive play action. While the draft on Monday resulted in starters in all position groups spread out across both teams, Sanford said he was impressed with the way his team handled that change and still managed to compete at a high level. “I was really impressed with the way the guys competed, and they really bought into the idea of dividing into teams. There was tremendous juice and energy going into this spring game,” Sanford added. Rising senior quarterback Mike White had a steady day under center on the Red squad, repeatedly finding Jernighan for big plays down the field while also stringing together seven consecutive completions before wrapping up his day in the first half. “It was a very productive 15 practices,” White said. “We got to learn this offense, gel as a new offense, and we got to learn the coaches as well. Overall, it was a very productive spring, but it doesn’t stop here. We still have offseason workouts in the summer, and player-led practices and all that good stuff.”
SANFORD INTRODUCES ‘RAISE THE W’ INITIATIVE AT SPRING GAME

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — At halftime of Saturday’s Red vs. White Spring Game, WKU Head Football Coach Mike Sanford introduced his ‘Raise the W’ initiative to signify the start of game week in Bowling Green beginning with the 2017 season.

The brainchild of the first-year head coach, the red flag features WKU’s varsity style ‘W’ which has appeared on lettermen jackets dating back to the 1920’s, and it will be raised each Monday by a selected Hilltopper on the basis of commitment to his teammates, the program and level of play from the previous week.

Area business and fans will be encouraged to also raise their own ‘W’ flag to help the Hilltoppers kick off game week in unison across town. Replica versions of the flag, which will fly in the south end zone of Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium, will be available this summer.
MOCKING THE DRAFT: HILLTOPPER LINEMAN FORREST LAMP

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — As Hilltopper fans anxiously await the start of the 2017 NFL Draft, set to begin at 7 p.m. CT on Thursday from Philadelphia, many of the nation’s draft experts have included former WKU All-American Forrest Lamp in their predictions on the first round.

WKUSports.com has collected 15 of the top mock drafts prior to Thursday’s first round, and the Venice, Fla., product has been projected anywhere from No. 9 (Cincinnati) to No. 31 (Atlanta). Of the 15 mocks collected, five have Lamp headed to Miami where he would reunite with former All-American quarterback Brandon Doughty, a seventh round selection of the team last season.

To date, WKU’s highest draft selection is Joseph Jefferson, selected in the third round, No. 74 overall, by the Indianapolis Colts in the 2002 draft. WKUSports.com will have a complete preview of the draft on Wednesday as well as coverage from Lamp’s draft party near his hometown on Thursday night.

Here’s a look at where Lamp stands in each mock draft:

**Danny Kelly (The Ringer)**
**Pick:** Cincinnati Bengals, #9
**Analysis:** Cincinnati finished tied for 25th in the NFL with 41 sacks surrendered last year and then lost its two best offensive linemen when LT Andrew Whitworth (Rams) and RG Kevin Zeitler (Browns) left in free agency. The Bengals need help on the offensive line, and Lamp is an athletic and versatile prospect with the potential to start from Day 1 at left guard or either tackle spot.

**Todd McShay (ESPN)**
**Pick:** Indianapolis Colts, #15
**Analysis:** Nearly 80 percent on the Colts’ designed runs last year were inside or outside zone, and Lamp is a highly athletic O-lineman who would thrive in such a scheme.

**Josh Norris (Rotoworld)**
**Pick:** Tennessee Titans, #18
**Analysis:** Again, I think the Titans trade out. Look for Chidobe Awuzie to be the target. But Lamp is another talent too good to pass up, especially after letting Chance Warmack walk. The offense is built on the running game and protecting Mariota.

**Will Brinson (CBS Sports)**
**Pick:** Denver Broncos, #20
**Analysis:** Pretty good value here, and the Broncos clearly need to get better on the offensive line, the one big problem for John Elway during his tenure as general manager in Denver. Lamp would give them a lot of depth and versatility on the line.

**Chris Burke (Sports Illustrated)**
**Pick:** Denver Broncos, #20
**Analysis:** The consensus has been to push Lamp inside to guard, but he deserves a shot to show what he can do at tackle. He could fill a role at either spot for the Broncos, who could lean on his athletic run blocking.

**Dane Brugler (NFLDraftScout.com)**
**Pick:** Miami Dolphins, #22
**Analysis:** The Dolphins have done some shuffling on the offensive line, shifting 2016 first-rounder Laremy Tunsil from guard to his more natural left tackle spot. The left guard spot is ready and waiting for Lamp.
**Daniel Jeremiah (NFL.com)**
**Pick:** Miami Dolphins, #22
**Analysis:** Laremy Tunsil kicks out to left tackle this season, which creates an opening at guard.

**Steve Palazzolo (Pro Football Focus)**
**Pick:** Miami Dolphins, #22
**Analysis:** Lamp has graded as a top-five offensive tackle in each of the last three years at Western Kentucky as he’s shown athleticism and power in the run game while allowing only 31 pressures on 1,621 attempts in pass protection. His mini arms will likely have the NFL kicking him inside to guard — though giving him a shot at offensive tackle seems like a low-risk proposition — and he can immediately upgrade the interior of the Dolphins’ offensive line that has had issues in recent years.

**Rob Rang (CBS Sports)**
**Pick:** Miami Dolphins, #22
**Analysis:** Trading away starting left tackle Branden Albert (to Jacksonville) says a lot about the Dolphins' confidence in last year's first round pick Laremy Tunsil. While Tunsil should have no problem re-acclimating to tackle after starring at left guard last season, his absence inside could be an issue. Lamp looks like a plug and play solution after a seamless transition inside to guard at the Senior Bowl.

**Chad Reuter (NFL.com)**
**Pick:** Miami Dolphins, #22
**Analysis:** The Dolphins are moving last year's first-rounder, Laremy Tunsil, to left tackle, making room for the Western Kentucky swing-man at guard.

**Charley Casserly (NFL.com)**
**Pick:** Houston Texans, #25
**Analysis:** Will the Texans trade up to get an OT or stay here?

**Ryan Wilson (CBS Sports)**
**Pick:** Houston Texans, #25
**Analysis:** Quarterback makes sense here, but the Texans could also stand to improve an offensive line that was mediocre in the running and passing game a year ago. Lamp, who didn't allow a sack last season, can play guard or tackle.

**Peter King (Monday Morning Quarterback)**
**Pick:** Seattle Seahawks, #26
**Analysis:** GM John Schneider overlooks Lamp’s short arms because he thinks he can start day one.

**Peter Schrager (Fox Sports)**
**Pick:** Atlanta Falcons, #31
**Analysis:** Chris Chester retired right after the first wave of free agency, and there could be a hole at guard for the Falcons this season. Lamp was a star at tackle in college but will play guard in the pros. He’s got a whole lot of nasty in him.

**Lance Zierlein (NFL.com)**
**Pick:** Atlanta Falcons, #31
**Analysis:** One of the safest draft picks in the first round, Lamp would fill a need and could step in immediately.
HILLTOPPERS SET FOR NFL DRAFT 2017’S START ON THURSDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Beginning Thursday evening, the 2017 Player Selection Meeting of the National Football League – commonly known as the NFL Draft – kicks off in Philadelphia with the first round selections on ESPN and NFL Network beginning at 7 p.m. CT.

Thursday has the potential to be a historic night for former All-American Forrest Lamp, a first round projection in many of the final mock drafts leading into the draft. Lamp, who started every game of his career for the Hilltoppers and played in 51 of a possible 53 games over his career, did not surrender a sack over his final two seasons on The Hill as he helped lead WKU to consecutive Conference USA championships. WKUSports.com featured a collection of 15 mock drafts on Wednesday with five slotting Lamp to the Miami Dolphins.

Following Thursday’s first round, rounds 2-3 begin on Friday at 6 p.m. CT where many analysts have projected WKU and the state of Kentucky’s all-time leader in receiving yards, receiving touchdowns and receptions, Taywan Taylor, to be selected. Taylor generated 4,234 receiving yards on 253 receptions with 41 touchdowns over his four-year career on The Hill.

On Saturday, rounds 4-7, beginning at 11 a.m., conclude the draft as a number of former Hilltoppers could hear their names called. Teams will have the opportunity to build their teams with a collection of Hilltoppers who combined for 39 wins over their four years on The Hill, the most successful senior class in WKU’s FBS history, including three consecutive bowl victories as well as consecutive C-USA championships.

NFL DRAFT BROADCAST SCHEDULE

Thursday, April 27 (Round 1) – 7 p.m. CT
Friday, April 28 (Rounds 2-3) – 6 p.m. CT
Saturday, April 29 (Rounds 4-7) – 11 a.m. CT

ProFootballFocus.com recently released their final Top 300 prospect rankings, and five Hilltoppers were included: Lamp (27), Taylor (84), Omarius Bryant (163), Keith Brown (229), and Max Halpin (254). Additionally, Fox Sports’ Peter Schrager released his final mock draft which slotted four Hilltoppers into draft spots: Lamp (31 to Atlanta), Taylor (83 to Tennessee), Brown (173 to Pittsburgh) and Branden Leston (223 to Miami).

WKU’s three draft selections last season tied the program record, set in the 17-round draft of 1971, and also led the Commonwealth and C-USA. Following the selections of Tyler Higbee, Brandon Doughty and Prince Charles Iworah, five more Hilltoppers were called to NFL camps as undrafted free agents, the most movement from The Hill to the NFL in program history. Beginning Thursday, that record is in jeopardy.

The Hilltoppers have had 31 draft picks in program history including six from 2013 to 2016. WKU’s highest pick came in 2002 when cornerback Joseph Jefferson was named in the third round (74 overall) by the Colts. Higbee became WKU’s earliest offensive player selected when he went in the fourth round (110 overall) to the Los Angeles Rams. The highest offensive lineman ever selected from a C-USA program – Houston’s Sebastian Vollmer to the New England Patriots in the second round (58 overall) of the 2009 draft.
TAYWAN TAYLOR SELECTED IN THIRD ROUND BY TENNESSEE TITANS

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Taywan Taylor’s football journey continues to head south on Interstate 65 as he was selected in the third round (No. 72 overall) by the Tennessee Titans in the 2017 NFL Draft. Taylor becomes the second-highest draft pick in program history, following offensive lineman Forrest Lamp’s selection at No. 38 earlier in the draft.

It was a calculated move by the Titans who traded up into the No. 72 slot with the New England Patriots to get Taylor. In the process, Tennessee surrendered the 83rd and 124th picks while adding No. 72 and No. 200.

After a stellar prep career at Louisville’s Pleasure Ridge Park, Taylor made his first stop on his journey down I-65 when he arrived on The Hill in 2013. Four short years later, Taylor owned nearly every receiving record in the books. He owns the career records for receiving yards (4,234), receptions (253) and receiving touchdowns (41) as well as the single-season marks in all of those categories at 1,730 yards, 98 catches and 17 touchdowns – a mark he hit in both his junior and senior campaign.

Now, he heads south once more to Nashville.

Taylor is the 33rd draft selection in program history and first taken by the Tennessee Titans since their relocation to the Music City. As the Houston Oilers, the franchise selected Eddie Preston in the 11th round (301 overall) of the 1980 draft and Mike McCoy in the eighth round (183 overall) of the 1974 draft. Since 2013, WKU has posted eight draft selections, tied for the most in C-USA.

Over his four-year career, the Hilltoppers won 39 games including three consecutive bowl championships and two consecutive Conference USA titles. As a captain on the 2016 squad, Taylor racked up first team All-Conference USA honors and was a two-time semifinalist for the Fred Biletnikoff Award, given to the nation’s top wide receiver. He was named a second team All-American in 2015 by ProFootballFocus.com.

The Hilltoppers became the first team in the Commonwealth and in Conference USA to have a pair of draft picks through the first 72 picks. Within state lines, they are the only program with a draft pick inside the first 72.

At the time of the pick, only six schools in the country had more draft selections than the Hilltoppers (Alabama, Ohio State, LSU, Florida, Washington, and Michigan), and WKU was tied with Florida State, Clemson and Colorado with two.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 28, 2017
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

FORREST LAMP BECOMES HIGHEST DRAFT SELECTION IN PROGRAM HISTORY; SECOND ROUND TO THE LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

SARASOTA, Fla. — He contributed to WKU’s first-ever FBS bowl appearance. He started on WKU’s first-ever bowl championship team. He captained WKU’s first-ever FBS conference championship. And on Friday, Forrest Lamp became WKU’s highest-ever draft selection when he was selected No. 38 overall by the Los Angeles Chargers in the 2017 NFL Draft.

From Sarasota, near his native Venice, Fla., Lamp received the phone call from the Chargers at 7:35 p.m. ET as he became WKU’s first-ever second round pick and learned where his NFL career would begin. It was a culmination of years of hard work and effort for Lamp to reach this milestone, both for his family and for the Hilltoppers.

Lamp becomes the 32nd draft selection in program history and the first Hilltopper to be taken by the Charges. Prior to Lamp’s selection, cornerback Joseph Jefferson set the standard for draft selections on The Hill when he was taken in the third round (No. 74 overall) by the Indianapolis Colts in the 2002 draft. Over his four-year career on The Hill, Lamp started all 51 games he played in including a stretch of 39 straight at left tackle. A model of consistency both in health and fundamentals, Lamp missed just two games in his career, those coming during the Hilltoppers’ 2016 championship campaign.

The former All-American is also the highest-ever draft selection among Conference USA offensive linemen and only the second second-round selection the league has produced at the position in its 20-plus years. He made history as WKU’s first USA Today All-American in 2016, earning second team honors from the publication. Prior to Lamp’s selection at No. 38, Houston’s Sebastian Vollmer was the highest C-USA offensive lineman at pick 58 to the Patriots in 2009.

A two-time team captain, Lamp did not allow a single sack over his final two seasons on The Hill despite the Hilltoppers throwing a total of 1,025 passes. He allowed just five quarterback pressures in his final season as he cemented his position as one of the nation’s top offensive linemen.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / May 1, 2017
Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

EIGHT HILLTOPPERS GET NFL OPPORTUNITIES OVER THE WEEKEND

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — After tying for the most draft picks in the Commonwealth for the second consecutive years, the WKU Hilltoppers saw a total of eight former Hilltoppers get an opportunity to pursue their NFL dreams over the weekend following the 2017 NFL Draft.

On Friday’s second night of the draft, All-American offensive tackle Forrest Lamp became the highest-ever Hilltopper selected as he went No. 38 overall to the Los Angeles Chargers as the sixth pick in the second round. Lamp supplanted cornerback Joseph Jefferson, who went No. 74 overall to the Indianapolis Colts in 2002, as the standard bearer for draft selections.

Lamp also became the highest-ever Conference USA offensive lineman picked, passing Houston’s Sebastian Vollmer (No. 58) who went to the New England Patriots in 2009.

He was joined later in the draft by Indiana lineman Dan Feeney, and the pair are expected to be contributors immediately along the line for the newly relocated Chargers as they look to protect All-Pro quarterback Phillip Rivers and provide running lanes for Pro Bowl running back Melvin Gordon. Many of the nation’s top draft analysts considered Lamp’s selection in the second round one of the steals of the draft as he was widely viewed as a first-round prospect.

In Friday’s third round, former All-American receiver Taywan Taylor, the owner of every career receiving record in program history, became the third selection by the Tennessee Titans who selected the Louisville native No. 72 overall. Taylor became the second-highest draft pick in school history. He joined Western Michigan receiver Corey Davis and FIU tight end Jonnu Smith as offensive selections for the Titans who placed an emphasis on finding offensive playmakers to surround quarterback Marcus Mariota this season.

It was a calculated move by the Titans who traded up into the No. 72 slot with the New England Patriots to get Taylor. In the process, Tennessee surrendered the 83rd and 124th picks while adding No. 72 and No. 200.

Lamp and Taylor became the first C-USA duo from the same team selected in the third round or higher since Dewayne White (2nd) and Dave Ragone (3rd) of Louisville in 2003.

Following the conclusion of the draft on Saturday, six more Hilltoppers received calls from NFL teams to sign as undrafted free agents or to attend their rookie minicamps.

As undrafted free agents, offensive tackle Darrell Williams, Jr., signed with San Francisco, defensive tackle Omarius Bryant signed with the Baltimore Ravens, and quarterback Tyler Ferguson signed with the Tennessee Titans.

Linebacker Keith Brown (Seattle Seahawks), snapper Nolan Dowling (Kansas City Chiefs) and offensive center Max Halpin (Tampa Bay Buccaneers) all received rookie minicamp invitations.

It marks the second consecutive season eight Hilltoppers have gotten the opportunity to continue on to the NFL, tying the record set last season.

HILLTOPPERS HEADING TO THE NFL

- Forrest Lamp, Los Angeles Chargers
- Taywan Taylor, Tennessee Titans
- Omarius Bryant, Baltimore Ravens
- Tyler Ferguson, Tennessee Titans
- Darrell Williams, Jr., San Francisco 49ers
- Keith Brown, Seattle Seahawks
- Nolan Dowling, Kansas City Chiefs
- Max Halpin, Tampa Bay Buccaneers

The eight join six former Hilltoppers currently listed on NFL rosters: Brandon Doughty (Miami Dolphins), Jonathan Dowling (Buffalo Bills), Jack Doyle (Indianapolis Colts), George Fant (Seattle Seahawks), Tyler Higbee (LA Rams), and Prince Charles Iworah (49ers).
STEWART OFFERS UPDATE ON HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL NFL DRAFT

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — In keeping with a relatively new tradition on The Hill, WKU Director of Athletics Todd Stewart updated the media on the Hilltopper Football program following another successful NFL Draft weekend which saw a pair of Hilltoppers become the top draft picks in school history while eight others help set a new milestone for WKU players with NFL opportunities.

“It was a tremendous weekend, again, for our football program,” Stewart said. “To think, we had as many players drafted in the top 72 picks of the draft as the entire Big 12 Conference combined. I just think that illustrates how far this program has come and what the ‘new normal’ is (related to the NFL).”

Forrest Lamp and Taywan Taylor become the highest and second-highest draft selections in school history over the weekend, breaking Joseph Jefferson’s 2002 mark of No. 74 when they were selected No. 38 and No. 72 overall, respectively.

Following the draft, eight more Hilltoppers received the call to pursue their NFL future as either undrafted free agents or rookie mini-camp invitees. Keith Brown, Omarius Bryant, Nick Dawson-Brents, Nolan Dowling, Tyler Ferguson, Max Halpin, Anthony Wales and Darrell Williams, Jr., combined with the draft picks to put a total of 10 Hilltoppers in NFL camps over the next two weekends, breaking last year’s high-water mark of eight.

With 10 players heading to camps and six other Hilltoppers already on rosters, those 16 combine to cover 12 NFL cities which previously had minimal ties, if any, to Western Kentucky University, a fact Stewart pointed out on Wednesday.

“I really believe the success of our football program, and what it has achieved over the past five years, has enhanced our entire university and Bowling Green, Kentucky,” Stewart added. “We’ve had incredible television exposure which shines a favorable light on the University. (The players are taking the Western Kentucky brand) to 12 cities across this country because of our football program.”

According to a recent study done by CaptureHigherEd.com, during WKU’s appearance in the 2016 Boca Raton Bowl, a game WKU won 51-31, “the Hilltoppers also drove thousands of visitors to admissions-related pages on their website. In the middle of the game, two-and-a-half times as many people visited those sites compared to before the game.”

WKU’s scheduling over the recent growth of the football program has also contributed to success on draft weekend. Throughout the draft process, NFL Network’s top analyst Mike Mayock repeatedly referenced Lamp’s performance against then-No. 1 Alabama in Tuscaloosa as “the best tape I’ve seen from an offensive lineman in five years.” Stewart reiterated on Thursday that not only scheduling high caliber opponents, but performing well against those opponents was an intentional move that would continue going forward.

“We want to play the types of games that give our players a chance to succeed, but also to be noticed,” Stewart said. “I think when you play an LSU or an Alabama or an SEC or Big Ten team, you’ll have a lot more eyeballs on you. Certainly with the Alabama game this year and in 2012 when we played them, the way Forrest Lamp played this year shined a light on him that no other game could have done.”

The 2017 season is fast approaching under first-year head coach Mike Sanford, set for Sept. 2 against Eastern Kentucky, and while the staff has changed, Stewart’s expectation of the program has not.

“I’ve always said I like the challenges that come with winning more than the challenges that come with losing, and each year we’ve achieved more and more,” Stewart added. “What I really like our staff that we have right now – there are still some places we haven’t been yet – there are some people on this staff, including our head coach Mike Sanford, who have been to the places we haven’t been yet. They have high goals and have embraced where our program is right now, and our players have embraced that which led to an exciting spring.”
Opening statement...
“You know it was a tremendous weekend, again, for our football program. Two numbers really stand out to me are 98 and six. We’ve had football for 98 years here and to have the two highest draft picks ever in the history of our program occur on the same day this year was truly historic. I’m thrilled for Forrest (Lamp) and Taywan (Taylor), both deserve everything that is coming to them. The six is, as you guys probably saw, there is only six programs in the country that have had more players drafted in the top 72 than Western Kentucky did. And that’s pretty amazing to think we had as many players drafted in the top 72 as the entire Big 12 Conference combined. I mean, I think that just illustrates how far this program has come, and really what the new normal is. I think the new normal for us is these types of achievements related to the NFL. This year we have 10 players going to camps this weekend. Last year, at the time, we had the highest ever, which was eight. And when you think about that, it’s basically between a third and a half of our senior classes are going to NFL camps. That’s really where this football program is.”

On how having Hilltoppers getting drafted enlightens recruits about WKU...
“I think so. Because a lot of times, whether in life you take a job, I think you would want to know what it might lead to. And certainly for anybody playing high school football, they want to look at a program and know not only what they can achieve there, but what possibilities they might have once their collegiate playing career is finished. The fact that we have 16 players in NFL camps this weekend certainly shows what types of opportunities you have here as a football player.”

On how the exposure from football has enhanced the entire school...
“I would totally agree with that. We actually have a saying here within athletics, ‘a rising tide lifts all boats,’ and what we mean by that is when one program achieves, that’s good for everybody because it enhances all the other programs. And I really believe the success of our football program, what has been achieved over the last five years, has enhanced our entire university and Bowling Green, Kentucky. What I mean by that specifically is just look at what has happened from an exposure standpoint and from an achievement standpoint over the last five years. In 2012, we made a bowl game for the first time, and then in 2014 we won a bowl game for the first time. Then, you just fast forward and we’ve won a bowl game three-straight years and won two-straight conference championships. Incredible TV exposure has come with that and obviously shines a favorable light of the university. As I mentioned before, we have 16 players going to NFL camps this weekend, and I went back and looked it up, and they are going to 12 different teams. So you have the Western Kentucky brand in 12 different cities across the country because of our football program, that wouldn’t have happened otherwise. So tremendous credit goes to our players and coaches for what they have all done to take the program where it is now and enhance the university in the process.”
A headshot and action shot are attached of quarterback Mike White.

QUARTERBACK MIKE WHITE TO SERVE AS COUNSELOR AT MANNING PASSING ACADEMY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU’s rising senior quarterback Mike White, Conference USA’s reigning Newcomer of the Year, will serve as a quarterback counselor for the 2017 Manning Passing Academy this summer in Thibodaux, La. The camp, run by Archie Manning and his sons, Cooper, Eli and Peyton, will be held June 22-25 on the campus of Nicholls State University. Each year, the camp selects the most successful and brightest players and coaches from across the country to participate in the camp, now in its 22nd year of operation. Camp counselors, comprised primarily of the nation’s elite college quarterbacks, assist in instruction for high school campers at offensive skill positions throughout the week. Former All-American quarterback Brandon Doughty served as a counselor at the camp prior to the 2015 season.

"I am excited and honored to be selected as a camp counselor for the Manning Passing Academy,” White said. “It will be an opportunity of a lifetime to learn from Archie, Peyton, Eli and Copper while sharing the game we love with the next generation."

Coming into 2016, there was uncertainty at the quarterback position following the departure of Doughty, but White put that question to rest in the season opener – right around the time he connected with former wide receiver Nicholas Norris on an 87-yard scoring strike against Rice. After leading the nation’s top scoring offense and securing WKU’s second consecutive C-USA title, White returns to The Hill as one of the nation’s elite passers. White (10.5) and Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield (11.1) were the only two quarterbacks in the country last season to average 10 yards or better per passing attempts, a Conference USA single-season record, and White’s 181.4 passer rating not only ranked No. 3 nationally and second all-time in C-USA history, it also set a single-season school record. And, White’s 4,363 passing yards were No. 5 nationally.

First-year Hilltopper head coach Mike Sanford has a history of tutoring elite quarterbacks to NFL futures, as he worked with Doughty in 2010, Stanford quarterbacks Andrew Luck and Kevin Hogan, and Notre Dame quarterback Deshone Kizer. All four quarterbacks are now on NFL rosters, and Sanford sees the same ability from his senior signal caller.

“Mike has all the characteristics you want in an elite quarterback and leader of your football team,” Sanford said. “The Manning Academy is a gathering of the game’s best, and this is an honor for Mike and for our program to see him included in the event. We think he has a tremendous future and can’t wait to get back to work in preparation for this fall.”

Sanford, White, and the 2017 Hilltoppers open the season on September 2 against in-state foe Eastern Kentucky at Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium.
DENNIS EDWARDS NAMED TO 2017 RIMINGTON TROPHY SPRING WATCH LIST

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Offensive lineman Dennis Edwards was named to the 2017 Rimington Trophy Spring Watch List, the Boomer Esiason Foundation announced Monday. The WKU junior is one of 63 in Division I football to be mentioned in the running for most outstanding center in the country.

Edwards has started 26-of-28 games for the Hilltoppers in his first two seasons at right guard, but took the majority of repetitions at center during spring practice as the team looks to replace All-Conference USA selection and four-year starter Max Halpin.

WKU had the top scoring offense last year at 45.5 points per game and the strong offensive front was a big part of that success. Anthony Wales’ 1,621 yards on the ground marked the seventh-straight 1,000-yard rusher for the Hilltoppers, while his 27 rushing scores led the nation and set a new program single-season record.

In 2016, ProFootballFocus.com rated him as the No. 31 guard in the country, while being a part of the No. 4 offensive line in all of college football.

As a freshman in 2015 following a redshirt year, Edwards started 12-of-14 games while WKU broke single-season records for passing yards and total offense. From Snellville, Georgia, Edwards graduated from South Gwinnett High School and was rated by Scout.com as the No. 19 center prospect in the nation.

The award is named after Dave Rimington, a consensus First Team All-American center at Nebraska in 1981 and 1982. For his stellar play those two seasons, he became the first player to win a pair of Outland Trophy Awards as the nation’s finest interior lineman.

The winner of the 2017 Rimington Trophy will be recognized at the conclusion of the season at the Rococo Theatre in Lincoln, Nebraska, on Saturday, January 13, 2018.
HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL ANNOUNCES 2017 HOME KICKOFF TIMES

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — The Mike Sanford Era officially begins under the lights as the Hilltoppers are set to host in-state foe Eastern Kentucky at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 2, to open the 2017 season. Sanford’s debut was one of six WKU home kickoff times announced Wednesday. The renewal of the “Battle of the Bluegrass” matchup with Eastern Kentucky will mark the 86th time the two programs have met on the gridiron, dating back to 1914. The Hilltoppers and Colonels last met in 2008, and WKU leads the all-time series 48-34-3.

After a road trip to Illinois (Sept. 9), WKU will host back-to-back night games as the Conference USA opener versus Louisiana Tech (Sept. 16), a rematch of last year’s C-USA Championship Game, and a non-conference game against Ball State are both slated for 6 p.m. kickoffs. Since joining the league in 2014, the Hilltoppers and Louisiana Tech have played four times and have split the series down the middle with losses in Ruston in 2014 and 2016. WKU has won both home matchups, including last season’s C-USA Championship Game. No other league opponent has played the Hilltoppers as close as the Bulldogs, with the average margin of victory favoring the Tops by only 4.6 points over the last three games.

WKU will host Charlotte on Oct. 14 for the annual homecoming game, set for a 3:30 p.m. kick, as the first-ever meeting between the two programs. Two weeks later, conference opponent Florida Atlantic (Oct. 28) comes to town, with the Owls and Hilltoppers squaring off at 3:30 p.m.

The regular season home slate wraps up with Friday night lights, as the previously announced Middle Tennessee game has moved for a national television audience. The game will kick off at 7 p.m.

Additional information regarding television broadcasts will be announced at a later date.

2017 HOME KICKOFF TIMES

• Eastern Kentucky – Saturday, Sept. 2 – 6 p.m.
• Louisiana Tech – Saturday, Sept. 16 – 6 p.m.
• Ball State – Saturday, Sept. 23 – 6 p.m.
• Charlotte – Oct. 14 – 3:30 p.m.
• Florida Atlantic – Oct. 28 – 3:30 p.m.
• Middle Tennessee – Nov. 17 – 7 p.m.
SIX WKU STUDENT-ATHLETES SUSPENDED FROM ALL TEAM-RELATED ACTIVITIES

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Six WKU student-athletes, Quinton Baker, Chris Johnson, Xavier Lane, Tyler Obee, Jahcour Pearson, and Cecil Stallings, have been suspended indefinitely from all team-related activities pending further developments.
WKU FOOTBALL AT ILLINOIS SET FOR 7 P.M. CT KICKOFF

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU’s second-ever meeting with Illinois will be under the lights of Memorial Stadium in Champaign, Ill., as the game has been designated for a 7 p.m. CT kick on Sept. 9, and will air nationally on the Big Ten Network, the network announced today.

Ten of WKU’s regular season games now have assigned kick times with only road trips to UTEP and Vanderbilt still to be announced. The Hilltoppers traveled to the Illini in 2014 but fell 42-34 in a game where quarterback Brandon Doughty threw for 297 yards on 28-of-48 passing with two touchdowns. Defensive back Wonderful Terry had a 95-yard strip-and-score fumble return, and a Garrett Schwettman field goal put the Hilltoppers up 27-21 late in the third quarter. However, Illinois rallied with three consecutive touchdowns to pull away in the final frame.
An updated schedule with announced times and TV assignments has been attached.

FIVE HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL GAMES ADDED TO TELEVISION BROADCAST SCHEDULE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Five Hilltopper Football games were added to the national television broadcast schedule, Conference USA announced, on Wednesday as a part of a league-wide television announcement across all broadcast partners.

Due to television, WKU’s regular season finale at FIU has moved from Saturday, Nov. 25 to Friday, Nov. 24 – the Friday following Thanksgiving.

Three games, all home match-ups, will air on Stadium, formerly American Sports Network, including Louisiana Tech (Sept. 16), Ball State (Sept. 23) and Florida Atlantic (Oct. 28). WKU’s final two road contests of the 2017 regular season, at Marshall (Nov. 11) and at FIU (Nov. 24) will air on beIN Sports.

Stadium is a new, fully programmed, 24/7 multi-platform sports network that brings together exclusive live game and event coverage, extensive highlights, classic games, original programming, and daily live studio programming. Stadium includes a 24/7 linear feed distributed across both digital and broadcast platforms, as well as a comprehensive array of on demand content including additional live events and VOD highlights accessible via owned and operated STADIUM platforms and select distribution partners.

The network was formed when Campus Insiders, 120 Sports and The American Sports Network combined forces to take advantage of a combined collection of professional and collegiate rights and unique access to both digital and television distribution opportunities.

WKU appeared on beIN Sports last season when the Hilltoppers hosted FIU, while Stadium is a new venture. Two of WKU’s games, Old Dominion and Florida Atlantic, aired on ASN in 2016.

The five games join three other televised games including Tuesday’s announcement of Illinois on the Big Ten Network. CBS Sports Network will also air the Old Dominion (Oct. 20) and Middle Tennessee (Nov. 17) games.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>TV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
<td>Eastern Kentucky</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
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<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>at Illinois</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>Big Ten Network</td>
<td>Champaign, Ill.</td>
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<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Louisiana Tech*</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
<td>Stadium</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>Ball State</td>
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<td>Stadium</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>at UTEP*</td>
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<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
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<td>Oct. 14</td>
<td>Charlotte*</td>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 20 (Friday)</td>
<td>at Old Dominion*</td>
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<td>CBS Sports Network</td>
<td>Norfolk, Va.</td>
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<td>Oct. 28</td>
<td>Florida Atlantic*</td>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Stadium</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>at Vanderbilt</td>
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<td>Nashville, Tenn.</td>
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<td>Nov. 11</td>
<td>at Marshall*</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>beIN Sports</td>
<td>Huntington, W.Va.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 17 (Friday)</td>
<td>Middle Tennessee*</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>CBS Sports Network</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 24 (Friday)</td>
<td>at FIU*</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
<td>beIN Sports</td>
<td>Miami, Fla.</td>
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Home games in **BOLD** | * Indicates Conference USA game | All times CT
HILLTOPPERS HEADED BACK TO LOUISVILLE FOR FOURTH YEAR OF LOUISVILLE KICKOFF PARTY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — For the fourth-straight year, the WKU Hilltoppers will host their annual Louisville Kickoff Party, presented this year by the WKU Greater Louisville Alumni Chapter, at Buffalo Wild Wings in the Shelbyville Road Plaza (4600 Shelbyville Road) on Thursday, July 27. The event is set for a 6 p.m. ET start and will feature the back-to-back Conference USA Champion Hilltoppers and first-year head coach Mike Sanford.

“It’s really important for our program to be in Louisville,” Sanford said. “It’s not the actual capital of the state, but for all intents and purposes – economically, socially, culturally – Louisville is as important an area as there is, both in recruiting and in developing relationships with our alumni. There are 17 players on our roster from the Louisville-area, so having our Red Towel displayed prominently in 11 high schools is a big deal in Louisville.”

The upcoming event will feature autographs, prizes and giveaways and food specials. Sanford, select WKU Football assistant coaches, WKU Director of Athletics Todd Stewart and select Hilltoppers of local interest will also speak at the event. Fans will also have the chance to get their photo taken with a plethora of hardware, including the 2015 and 2016 C-USA Championship trophies as well as all three of WKU’s bowl trophies, including the Bahamas, Miami Beach and Boca Raton bowls.

Big Red Vette Raffle tickets will also be available for purchase for a chance to win a 2017 Corvette. WKU features more Louisville-area players than any other football program in the state, with 17 Hilltoppers doting the roster from 11 different high schools in the area.

The Hilltoppers and Sanford begin their 2017 campaign at home against in-state foe Eastern Kentucky on Sept. 2. Kick is set for 6 p.m., as the two schools meet again on the gridiron for the first time since 2008 in a renewal of the most-played football series in the Commonwealth.
FORMER WKU TIGHT END MITCHELL HENRY PASSES AWAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Former WKU and NFL tight end Mitchell Henry passed away Friday morning following a courageous and determined fight against leukemia. He was 24 years old.

“It is with great sadness that we learned of Mitchell’s passing this morning,” Director of Athletics Todd Stewart said. “Mitchell was as committed to his teammates, his University, his friends and his family as you will ever find, and we were so fortunate to have him as part of our Hilltopper family. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, his lovely wife Madison, and all of those who were blessed to have known Mitchell.”

Henry, a star at Elizabethtown High School during his prep days, was a standout tight end for the Hilltoppers from 2011-14 and was an integral part of WKU’s rise up the FBS ranks. During Henry’s time on The Hill, the Hilltoppers secured their first winning season at the FBS level (2011), first FBS bowl appearance (2012) and first FBS bowl wins (2014).

For his career, Henry tallied 1,094 yards on 78 catches with 12 touchdowns, enjoying his most productive season as a senior. A true ironman, Henry played in 47 games over his four-year career with 22 starts, including a career-best nine in his final campaign.

Following his career on The Hill, Henry signed free agent deals with the Green Bay Packers, the Denver Broncos, and the Baltimore Ravens. Henry saw action in two regular season games with the Broncos in 2015.