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WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 2, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

FORMER WKU QUARTERBACK MIKE WHITE HEADED TO 2018 NFL SCOUTING COMBINE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — One day after his engagement, former WKU quarterback Mike White received more good news in the form of an invitation to the 2018 NFL Scouting Combine, held Mar. 2-5 in Indianapolis at Lucas Oil Stadium.

"We are thrilled for Mike to get yet another opportunity to showcase his ability as one of the nation's best quarterbacks at the NFL Combine," said head coach Mike Sanford. "Mike has all the tools to be able to succeed at the next level, and this will be a great platform to highlight his skill at the position in front of NFL coaches and executives."

A two-year starter and All-Conference performer for the Hilltoppers, White led WKU to the 2016 Conference USA Championship, the 2016 Boca Raton Bowl Championship and threw for 8,540 yards and 63 touchdowns in the red and white. White is one of only two quarterbacks in school history to have multiple passing seasons of over 4,000 yards and his career quarterback rating of 158.1 is second in program history.

White's ability to make smart decisions with the football was one of his trademarks on The Hill as evidenced by his school-record marks of 161 consecutive passing attempts without an interception and 14 consecutive completions in a game.

The Pembroke Pines, Fla., native becomes WKU's second consecutive starting quarterback to attend the NFL Combine, following in the footsteps of former signal caller Brandon Doughty who attended the 2016 combine before becoming a draft selection of the Miami Dolphins. He is also the fifth Hilltopper in the past three seasons to attend the NFL's top annual scouting event.

Doughty and Los Angeles Rams tight end Tyler Higbee went in 2016 while Taywan Taylor (Tennessee Titans) and Forrest Lamp (Los Angeles Chargers) attended last season. Quarterback workouts at the combine are expected to be held on Mar. 3.

It will be a busy offseason for White who will also be participating in the 2018 Reese's Senior Bowl, held Jan. 27 in Mobile, Ala. Practices for the game begin Jan. 23. Both the senior bowl and combine can be seen on NFL Network.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 23, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL ANNOUNCES 2018 SCHEDULE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Non-conference trips to Wisconsin and Louisville and a challenging Conference USA slate highlight the 2018 WKU Football schedule, the league office announced Tuesday.

The Hilltoppers open the 2018 season under second-year head coach Mike Sanford on Aug. 31 with a Friday night trip to Camp Randall Stadium in Madison, Wisc., home of the reigning Orange Bowl Champion Wisconsin Badgers. It will mark WKU's second trip to Wisconsin (the first since 2001) and fourth time in the past five seasons the Hilltoppers have traveled to Big Ten country.

WKU opens its home slate Sept. 8, hosting Maine in the first-ever meeting between the two programs. Then, an in-state showdown with Louisville - the first of a three-game series through 2020 - awaits at Papa John's Cardinal Stadium on Sept. 15. It will be the first time the Hilltoppers and Cardinals have met on the gridiron since 1998, with Louisville holding a 19-12 advantage in the overall series.

WKU stays on the road to close out non-conference play the following week to wrap up a series with Ball State (Sept. 22) before opening up C-USA play at home against division rival Marshall.

After a bye week, WKU travels to Charlotte (Oct. 13) for the first time in program history before a two-game homestand with games against Old Dominion (Oct. 20) and FIU (Oct. 27).

The Hilltoppers then close out their final four games with three road trips, including one just down the road at Middle Tennessee (Nov. 3), followed by Florida Atlantic (Nov. 10), and Louisiana Tech (Nov. 24). WKU will honor its seniors and close out the home slate at Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium the week prior to Louisiana Tech (Nov. 24) when the Hilltoppers host UTEP on Nov. 17.

It is important to note that all games are subject to date changes and may move in order accommodate national television. Kickoff times and specialty games such as Homecoming will be announced at a later date.

Season tickets for the 2018 season are now on sale through the WKU Ticket Office and begin at just \$80.

To discuss your options, call the ticket office today at 1-800-5-BIGRED.

COMPLETE SCHEDULE

Aug. 31 (Fri.) – at Wisconsin

Sept. 8 – Maine

Sept. 15 – at Louisville

Sept. 22 – at Ball State

Sept. 29 - Marshall*

Oct. 6 – BYE

Oct. 13 – at Charlotte*

Oct. 20 – Old Dominion*

Oct. 27 – FIU*

Nov. 3 – at Middle Tennessee*

Nov. 10 – at Florida Atlantic*

Nov. 17 – UTEP*

Nov. 24 – at Louisiana Tech*

WKU 2018 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Location
Aug. 31 (Fri.)	at Wisconsin	Madison, Wisc.
Sept. 8	Maine	Bowling Green, Ky.
Sept. 15	at Louisville	Louisville, Ky.
Sept. 22	at Ball State	Muncie, Ind.
Sept. 29	Marshall*	Bowling Green, Ky.
<i>Oct. 6</i>	<i>BYE</i>	
Oct. 13	at Charlotte*	Charlotte, N.C.
Oct. 20	Old Dominion*	Bowling Green, Ky.
Oct. 27	FIU*	Bowling Green, Ky.
Nov. 3	at Middle Tennessee*	Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Nov. 10	at Florida Atlantic*	Boca Raton, Fla.
Nov. 17	UTEP*	Bowling Green, Ky.
Nov. 24	at Louisiana Tech*	Ruston, La.

Home games in **BOLD** | * Indicates Conference USA game

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 24, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Deon Yelder Features: [WBKO](#) | [The All-American](#)

TIGHT END DEON YELDER ADDED TO SENIOR BOWL ROSTER

MOBILE, Ala. — After competing in last Saturday's NFLPA Collegiate Bowl, former WKU tight end Deon Yelder is headed back across the country as a roster addition to the South team at the 2018 Senior Bowl in Mobile.

Yelder joins former WKU quarterback Mike White on the South team roster and gives the Hilltoppers multiple participants in the game for the second-straight year after Taywan Taylor and Forrest Lamp participated last year. He is also the third WKU tight end to ever work out at the Senior Bowl, joining Jack Doyle and Tyler Higbee.

Aside from the week of practices with the nation's top senior talent, Yelder will get the additional exposure to NFL scouts, coaches, and general managers which all leads up to the game, set for 1:30 p.m. from Ladd-Peebles Stadium on Saturday. NFL Network will air the game live.

A former walk-on who did not receive a scholarship or tally any receiving statistics prior to his senior campaign, Yelder exploded onto the scene in 2017 to lead WKU with seven touchdown receptions and rank second with 52 catches and 688 yards. The Louisville native's yardage mark set a single-season record for receiving yards by a tight end, and his versatility allowed him to rack up 52 points, another single-season school record for a tight end.

Nationally, Yelder finished fourth in receptions and third in receiving yards among all tight ends.

Prior to his standout senior season, Yelder's most notable moment came on a crucial double overtime field goal block at Middle Tennessee in 2016. The Hilltoppers took over after the block, scored, and converted on the extra point to win a pivotal game in Conference USA's East Division and ultimately catapulted the Red and White to their second consecutive C-USA championship that year.

Yelder will wear No. 86 for the South team this week and during the game on Saturday.





WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 25, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

SENIOR BOWL PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR WKU'S MIKE WHITE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — As former WKU quarterback Mike White continues his week of practice at the 2018 Reese's Senior Bowl, one of the best opportunities comes off the field: the chance to be seen by scouts, general managers, and coaches from across the National Football League.

"For him, a lot of (the positive) is the exposure, for scouts and coaches to be able to see him in person," said [ProFootballFocus.com's](http://ProFootballFocus.com) analyst Zac Robinson, a former Senior Bowl quarterback himself. "They can see how the ball comes out of his hand in person and get to know the kind of guy he is and those types of things. He's had a successful career, so it's about scouts seeing the production on the field and matching it up with their eyes and getting to know him on a personal level."

Robinson, who now develops quarterbacks including current Cleveland Browns quarterback DeShone Kizer, a disciple of WKU head coach Mike Sanford, said that White is a "great in-between the numbers, down-field thrower. He's a great down-the-field thrower. He's always graded well for us on deep throws and 20-plus yard throws."

White drew considerable accolades from the website during his two years on The Hill as he racked up nearly over 8,500 passing yards to become one of only two quarterbacks in program history to have multiple seasons of 4,000 or more yards passing.

"He throws dig routes and up the seam really, really well," Robinson said of White's professional future. "That stuff bodes well for the next level. He's got the ability to push the ball to any part of the field, but those in-between the numbers and deep shots are where I see him excel."

A two-year starter for the Hilltoppers after transferring from South Florida and redshirting during the 2015 season at WKU, White flourished under two offenses in the Red and White and has played in three separate offenses over his career. That variety in scheme, and his ability to adapt to it right away, is something Robinson feels will only help White moving forward.

"It takes a lot of guys two or three years to feel completely comfortable with the system, no matter if it's the college or NFL," Robinson, a three-year starter at Oklahoma State added. "Having the exposure that he's had to different offenses and his ability to piece it all together I think will definitely help him when he takes the transition. He'll be able to take things from every offense that he's had and use that to form into however, in his mind, he can learn it the fastest and compete right away."

PFF's Jordan Plocher, [in his Wednesday write-up from Senior Bowl practices](#), added this about White's performance during the week: "Western Kentucky QB Mike White appeared to be the steadiest and most accurate of the South team quarterbacks once again on Wednesday. White's practice performance will go a long way in helping his draft grade with teams, as he didn't have the same caliber of statistical season with a new coaching staff and offense that he had 2017."

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 27, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Action photos of both players are attached. Please credit Bobby McDuffie, WKU Athletics.

WHITE, YELDER SHOWCASE HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL AT SENIOR BOWL

MOBILE, Ala. — Former WKU stars Mike White and Deon Yelder each contributed to scores while White stole the show at quarterback leading his South team to a 45-16 victory over the North in the 2018 Reese's Senior Bowl.

White drew the start for the South team and quarterbacked his team for the entirety of the first quarter, throwing the game's first touchdown pass and delivering a 10-3 lead at the end of the period.

The Pembroke Pines, Fla., native drew consistent praise from analysts Charles Davis and Mike Mayock, with Mayock adding of White, "I think, by far, he's been the most impressive skill player in this game so far."

White, who only played in the first quarter, finished the day completing 8-of-11 passes for 128 yards and a touchdown with a long pass of 63 yards to LSU wide receiver D.J. Chark. White's touchdown pass was a 14-yard completion to UCF tight end Tre'Quan Smith. His passer rating of 200.5 was the second-highest in the game. On the Hill, White posted quarterback ratings of 200 or higher six times.

Yelder saw his first action in the third quarter, primarily as a blocking tight end, and added to WKU's program point total in the game with a one-yard touchdown reception on the goal line. It was Yelder's lone target of the day, and as he has done for at each step so far during his senior campaign, the Louisville, Ky., native made the most of his opportunity.

With White's passing touchdown and Yelder's receiving touchdown, WKU was the only program in the Senior Bowl to have multiple players responsible for scores. WKU was the only program in the Commonwealth to have players participate in the game and the only program in Conference USA to be represented by multiple players.

Next up for White is the NFL Scouting Combine, held in Indianapolis at Lucas Oil Stadium, Mar. 2-5.





WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / February 2, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Photos of TJ Woods are attached. Credit: Oregon State Athletics.

Note: TJ Woods – not T.J. Woods

WOODS JOINS HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL COACHING STAFF TO DIRECT OFFENSIVE LINE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — His offensive lines have paved the way for a Doak Walker Award winner and set records for rushing offense, and now TJ Woods is set to bring that coaching acumen to The Hill as he joins Mike Sanford's coaching staff as offensive line coach.

"The addition of TJ Woods to our program is a game-changer for our offensive line unit," Sanford said.

"He has overseen dominant rushing attacks at the highest level of college football. I look forward to working directly with TJ to produce a balanced and explosive offense on The Hill in 2018 and beyond."

Woods comes to The Hill following a three-year stint at Oregon State where he coached four offensive linemen to Pac-12 All-Conference honors and saw two of his linemen, Sean Harlow and Isaac Seumalo, get their names called in the NFL Draft. Harlow was a fourth round selection of the Atlanta Falcons in 2017 while Seumalo went in the third round to Philadelphia in 2016 and will play in Super Bowl LII.

"My wife, Kelly, and I are excited to be a part of the Hilltopper family," Woods said. "To be able to work for Coach Sanford and represent Western Kentucky University is a tremendous opportunity, and I look forward to building on the great tradition of tough, tenacious offensive line play here at WKU. My family and I are eager to join the Bowling Green community and get to work."

Under Woods' direction, the Oregon State offense carried the ball for a school-record 5.2 yards per carry in 2016 and increased its scoring average by more than a touchdown that season. The San Dimas, Calif., native was also a leader of men in the classroom as seven of his offensive linemen were named to the Pac-12 Conference All-Academic team during his time in Corvallis.

Prior to Oregon State, Woods served as the offensive line coach at Wisconsin where his group helped block for running back Melvin Gordon during his monster senior season in 2014 when he won the Doak Walker Award and was a Heisman Trophy finalist. That season, Gordon rushed for 2,587 yards, second-most in a single season in FBS history, and set the FBS single-game rushing record with 408 yards.

Behind Woods' offensive line, Gordon and fellow running back Corey Clement set the NCAA record for rushing by two backs with 3,536 yards. That 2014 season also saw the Badger offensive front set a school record for fewest sacks allowed with 13 as well as a Big Ten Conference record with 4,482 net rushing yards.

In his first season with Wisconsin in 2013, the Badgers set a then-school record with 3,689 rushing yards to go along with a school record 450.8 yards per game of total offense. With Woods' offensive line leading the way, Gordon and fellow running back James White became the first running backs in NCAA history to each eclipse 1,400 rushing yards in the same season.

All totaled, Woods mentored seven All-Big Ten players at Wisconsin, including four All-Americans, and helped offensive lineman Rob Havenstein get his name called in the second round of the 2015 NFL Draft by the Los Angeles Rams.

Before Wisconsin, Woods spent four years at Utah State (2009-12) including the final two directing the offensive line. The Aggies rewrote the offensive record books by setting school records for offense in consecutive seasons, concluding with 6,108 yards in 2012. Woods coached five players to All-Western Athletic Conference honors, including Tyler Larsen and Philip Gapelu in 2011 who became the first duo to USU linemen on the first team since 1997.

A former player at Azusa Pacific (2001-02) as well as Iowa State and Citrus Junior College – where he earned NJCAA All-American honors in 1999 – Woods got his coaching start as a graduate assistant at Azusa Pacific in 2003. After a two-year run as the school's tight ends coach, where he coached tight end Ricky Burgan to NAIA All-American honors, he spent a season coaching the offensive line at Citrus before going to New Mexico for two seasons to serve as a graduate assistant on the offensive line. Offensive lineman Eric Cook was drafted from New Mexico in the seventh round of the 2010 NFL Draft while Byron Bell was named a freshman All-American in 2008.

As of his hiring with the Hilltoppers, seven of Woods' former offensive line pupils are active on NFL rosters including Bell, Larsen, Havenstein, Harlow, Seumalo, Ryan Groy, and Tyler Marz.

Woods and his wife, the former Kelly Williams, have two daughters, Madison and McKenzie. A 2002 graduate from Azusa Pacific with a business degree, Woods continued to pursue his education and earned his Master's in Physical Education from Azusa Pacific in 2005.

Assistant coach Geoff Dartt, who continues his treatment towards overcoming a pair of brain tumors discovered in the fall, remains on staff as WKU's 10th full-time assistant coach in a new role.

THE WOODS FILE

PERSONAL

Born: Dec. 2, 1977

Hometown: San Dimas, Calif.

College: Azusa Pacific, '02 (Business); Azusa Pacific, '05 (M.S., Physical Education)

Wife: Kelly

Children: Madison and McKenzie

PLAYING CAREER (Offensive Line)

College: Citrus Junior College (1999), Iowa State (2000), Azusa Pacific (2001-02)

COACHING CAREER

2017: Oregon State (Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line)

2016: Oregon State (Co-Offensive Coordinator/Offensive Line/Tight Ends)

2015: Oregon State (Offensive Line)

2013-14: Wisconsin (Offensive Line)

2011-12: Utah State (Offensive Line)

2009-10: Utah State (Tight Ends/Special Teams)

2007-08: New Mexico (Graduate Assistant/Offensive Line)

2006: Citrus Junior College (Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator)

2004-05: Azusa Pacific (Tight Ends)

2003: Azusa Pacific (Graduate Assistant/Offensive Line)

BOWL EXPERIENCE

2014: Outback Bowl (Wisconsin, Coach)

2013: Capital One Bowl (Wisconsin, Coach)

2012: Famous Idaho Potato Bowl (Utah State, Coach)

2011: Famous Idaho Potato Bowl (Utah State, Coach)

2007: New Mexico Bowl (New Mexico, Coach)





WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / February 6, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

NFL.com Combine Profiles: [White](#) | [Iyiegbuniwe](#)

Complete Combine Schedule [HERE](#)

WHITE, IYIEGBUNIWE HEADED TO 2018 NFL SCOUTING COMBINE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — For the third consecutive season, WKU will be represented by a pair of former Hilltoppers at the NFL Scouting Combine as quarterback Mike White and linebacker Joel Iyiegbuniwe earned invitations to this year's event, the National Football League announced on Tuesday.

The Combine, held Feb. 27-March 5 in Indianapolis at Lucas Oil Stadium, features over 300 of the top draft-eligible prospects each season and is the destination for all NFL head coaches, general managers, and personnel departments for the week. Workouts are covered by NFL Network and will include quarterbacks on Saturday, March 3 and linebackers on Sunday, March 4.

Media availabilities for both players are the day prior to on-field workouts.

White and Iyiegbuniwe are the second former Hilltoppers from their position groups to attend the combine, following Brandon Doughty (2016) and linebacker Andrew Jackson (2014). Since 2013, WKU has been represented by 10 total Hilltoppers, including multiple participants four of the last five combines, and in every year except 2015.

A two-year starter and All-Conference performer for the Hilltoppers, White led WKU to the 2016 Conference USA Championship, the 2016 Boca Raton Bowl Championship and threw for 8,540 yards and 63 touchdowns in the red and white. White is one of only two quarterbacks in school history to have multiple passing seasons of over 4,000 yards and his career quarterback rating of 158.1 is second in program history.

Iyiegbuniwe declared for the draft a year early following a stellar All-Conference USA junior season. The Bowling Green, Ky., native led WKU in 2017 with 116 total tackles, including 51 solo tackles, and his 11.5 tackles for loss also led the red and white. His tackle numbers were the third-most in a single season in the FBS era, and his 200 career tackles rank him sixth in the FBS era. He capped his WKU career with an All-Conference USA First Team performance, the third-straight such honor for a WKU linebacker.

White and Iyiegbuniwe are two of nine participants from Conference USA schools, and WKU is the only school in the league with multiple players invited. In his Combine evaluations, NFL.com's Lance Zierlein gave White a 5.42 grade, the eighth-highest among the 18 quarterbacks invited and the third-highest in C-USA.

WKU's NFL Scouting Combine Participants (Year)

- LB Joel Iyiegbuniwe (2018)
- QB Mike White (2018)
- 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 Joseph Jefferson (2002)
- DB Mel Mitchell (2002)

- DB Bobby Sippio (2002)

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / February 7, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

[Signing Day Central](#) | [Head Coach Mike Sanford](#) | [Offensive Line Coach TJ Woods Introduced](#)

HILLTOPPERS WRAP UP HISTORIC RECRUITING CLASS ON WEDNESDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — With 13 signees already inked from December's first-ever Early Signing Period, WKU Football added to its already record-setting class as 10 future Hilltoppers signed their national letters of intent on Wednesday.

"It was a great day today," Sanford said. "The ink's drying on what I believe to be a historic signing class and a historic day for Western Kentucky Football. I think the star ratings are what they are and certain people put a lot of emphasis, a lot of value on that. I don't know I put much emphasis on that whatsoever, but I do know we signed a historic class for this university."

Representing nine states in all, from Texas to Florida, head coach Mike Sanford's second signing class on The Hill is, by all measurements of the national recruiting services, the best collection of talent in program history. The 23 future Hilltoppers included a newly-minted four-star recruit in quarterback Kevaris Thomas, the first-ever four-star prospect to sign to WKU out of high school, and 17 three-star rated players by 247Sports.com.

WKU signed eight three-star prospects in the class of 2017, Sanford's first on The Hill with just two months to recruit for a total of 26 three-star or better signees in two classes. In the previous five classes combined since 2012, the Hilltoppers signed a total of 25 three-stars from the high school ranks.

The 2018 signing class is also the highest ranked signing class in program history according to the 247Sports' national team rankings.

On Wednesday, receiver Kawan Williams (Savannah, Ga.) was the first NLI in the building, followed by linebacker Tre Leslie (Tucker, Ga.), defensive lineman Deporess Schletty (Alpharetta, Ga.), running back Garland LaFrance (New Orleans, La.), receiver Anthony Spurlock (New Orleans, La.), offensive lineman Mason Brooks (Cedar Park, Texas), defensive back B.J. Crim (Ocala, Fla.), and finally tight end Jay Gibson (Chattanooga, Tenn.).

Louisville, Ky., native Shannon Bishop's signature with the Hilltoppers as well as defensive lineman Nazir Sy (Norcross, Ga.) became public after the pair originally signed in December.

"Make no mistake about it, the success this program has experienced and the spoils we've been able to enjoy are a result of that [recruiting] success," Sanford said, speaking of his first tour of duty with the Hilltoppers in 2010. "It was built through the very hard work, the labor, the elbow grease that was put in through recruiting and the building of the roster. That to me is where we were at this past season. We had to get back to the drawing board in terms of just continuing to enhance this roster and make this roster better and better every single year. I think that we were able to achieve that without question today and with the December 20 signing period."

By position, the Hilltoppers secured the signatures of four wide receivers, two running backs, one tight end, one quarterback, and two offensive linemen on offense. Defensively, WKU added four defensive linemen, three linebackers, and six defensive backs.

WKU FOOTBALL 2018 SIGNING CLASS

2018 Signing Class Roster (Listed Alphabetically)

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown	High School
1. Gino Appleberry	RB	5-9	205	Atlanta, Ga.	Westlake HS
2. Devin Bell	DL	6-5	240	Goshen, Ala.	Goshen HS
3. Shannon Bishop	DB	5-11	165	Louisville, Ky.	Pleasure Ridge Park HS
4. A.J. Brathwaite	DB	6-0	190	Miami, Fla.	Central HS
5. Gunner Britton*	OL	6-6	290	Conway, S.C.	Conway HS
6. Mason Brooks	OL	6-6	270	Cedar Park, Texas	Cedar Park HS
7. Russell Brown	WR	6-3	195	Lehigh Acres, Fla.	Lehigh HS
8. B.J. Crim	DB	6-1	195	Ocala, Fla.	Vanguard HS
9. Spencer Gaddis	WR	6-0	170	Alpharetta, Ga.	Alpharetta HS
10. Jay Gibson	TE	6-5	245	Chattanooga, Tenn.	The McCallie School
11. Garland LaFrance	RB	5-10	175	New Orleans, La.	St. Augustine HS
12. Tre Leslie	LB	6-0	225	Tucker, Ga.	Tucker HS
13. Cardavion Myers	DB	5-11	175	Piedmont, Ala.	Piedmont HS
14. Malik Occiur*	DB	6-1	200	Oakland Park, Fla.	Northeast HS
15. Jayden Patterson	DB	6-0	185	Lawrenceville, Ga.	Mountain View HS
16. Deporess Schletty	DL	6-2	275	Alpharetta, Ga.	Alpharetta HS
17. Anthony Spurlock	WR	6-1	160	New Orleans, La.	Edna Carr HS
18. Nazir Sy	DL	6-2	320	Norcross, Ga.	Norcross HS
19. Lichon Terrell	DL	6-2	280	Hogansville, Ga.	Callaway HS
20. Kevaris Thomas	QB	6-4	250	Lakeland, Fla.	Lakeland HS
21. Trey Urquhart	LB	6-0	210	Kennesaw, Ga.	North Cobb HS
22. Kawan Williams	WR	6-0	175	Savannah, Ga.	Beach HS
23. Mario Wright	LB	6-1	220	Flossmoor, Ill.	Homewood-Flossmoor HS

* indicates signee enrolled early and is currently taking classes at WKU



WKU FOOTBALL 2018 SIGNING CLASS

2018 Signing Class Bios (with 247Sports.com star ranking)

Gino Appleberry – ★★ ★
5-9, 205, Running Back
Hallandale HS (Hallandale, Fla.)

Appleberry played for head coach Kareem Reid at Westlake High School; he was a team captain on the field and an Honor Roll student in the classroom. He rushed for 1,128 yards on 173 carries as a junior with eight touchdowns on the ground, while adding 303 yards and one touchdown on 12 receptions. He capped his high school career with 483 yards on 89 carries as a senior with eight touchdowns this past year. He is a three-star by 247Sports with a rating score of 81, ranking 122th nationally at his position and 179rd overall in the state. He chose WKU over 17 others including Michigan State, Oregon State, Rutgers, Florida Atlantic, Appalachian State and Fresno State.

Devin Bell – ★★ ★
6-5, 240, Defensive Line
Goshen HS (Goshen, Ala.)

Bell played for head coach Bart Snyder at Goshen High School and was a team captain, helping the Golden Eagles advance to the Alabama state semifinals this past year. As a senior, recorded 61 tackles and 14 sacks. He is rated as a three-star with an 80 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 79th overall in the state and 114th nationally at his position. He chose WKU over Louisville, Purdue, Tulane and Southern Miss.

Shannon Bishop – ★★ ★
5-11, 165, Defensive Back
Pleasure Ridge Park HS (Louisville, Ky.)

Bishop played for head coach Tommy Williams at Pleasure Ridge Park High School and was a team captain. Was named the Greater Louisville Offensive Player of the Game at the 2017 Best of the Bluegrass All-Star Game, while earning Class 6A All-District 3 honors at wide receiver, defensive back and special teams returner. As a junior, recorded 38 tackles with two interceptions on defense, while making 24 catches for 697 yards and seven touchdowns as a wide receiver. Ran an unofficial 4.29 time in the 40-yard dash at a WKU Football camp. He is rated as a two-star with a 79 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 18th overall in the state and 215th nationally at his position.

A.J. Brathwaite – ★★ ★
6-0, 190, Defensive Back
Central HS (Miami, Fla.)

Brathwaite played for head coach Roland Smith at Central High School, and was an Honor Roll student off the field for the Rockets. He is rated as a three-star with an 85 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 92nd nationally at his position and 177th overall in the state. He chose WKU over 14 others including Mississippi State, Ole Miss, UCF, East Carolina, Colorado State, Tulane, Florida Atlantic and Appalachian State.

WKU FOOTBALL 2018 SIGNING CLASS

Gunner Britton – ★ ★
6-6, 290, Offensive Line
Conway HS (Conway, S.C.)

Britton played for head coach Carlton Terry at Conway High School; he was a team captain on the field and an Honor Roll student in the classroom. Played for South Carolina in the 2017 Shrine Bowl against the North Carolina All-Stars. Helped lead the Tigers to 364 yards and 34 points per game this past year. He is rated as a two-star with a 79 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 52nd overall in the state and 212th nationally at his position.

Mason Brooks – ★ ★
6-6, 270, Offensive Line
Cedar Park HS (Cedar Park, Texas)

Brooks played for head coach Chris Ross at Cedar Park High School, and was an Honor Roll Student off the field for the Timberwolves. For his work up front, Brooks was named First Team All-District 19-5A in back-to-back seasons. He is rated as a two-star with a 77 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 263rd nationally at his position and 459th overall in the state.

Russell Brown – ★ ★ ★
6-3, 195, Wide Receiver
Lehigh HS (Lehigh Acres, Fla.)

Brown played for head coach James Chaney at Lehigh High School and was a team captain. Recorded 41 receptions for 418 yards and one touchdown for the Lightning, while also tallying 28 tackles and three sacks as a senior on defense. He is rated as a three-star with an 82 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 262nd nationally at his position and 284th overall in the state. He chose WKU over Oregon, Maryland, South Carolina, USF, Florida Atlantic and Appalachian State.

B.J. Crim – ★ ★ ★
6-1, 195, Defensive Back
Vanguard HS (Ocala, Fla.)

Crim played for head coach Edwain Farmer at Vanguard High School, and was an Honor Roll Student off the field for the Knights. Made 93 tackles combined in his junior and sophomore seasons, with three tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and an interception. He is rated as a three-star with an 85 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 94th nationally at his position and 180th overall in the state. He chose WKU over 14 others including Notre Dame, UCF, Louisville, Iowa State, Rutgers, Florida Atlantic and Marshall.

WKU FOOTBALL 2018 SIGNING CLASS

Spencer Gaddis – ★ ★ ★

6-0, 170, Wide Receiver

Alpharetta HS (Alpharetta, Ga.)

Gaddis played for head coach Jacob Nichols at Alpharetta High School, as the Raiders advanced to the Georgia state quarterfinals this past year. Made 50 catches for 721 yards and seven touchdowns as a senior, following 38 receptions for 464 yards and four scores in his junior season. He is rated as a three-star with an 82 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 167th overall in the state and 254th nationally at his position. Chose WKU over Utah, Tulane and Arkansas State.

Jay Gibson – ★ ★ ★

6-5, 245, Tight End

The McCallie School (Chattanooga, Tenn.)

Gibson played for head coach Ralph Potter at The McCallie School, and was an Honor Roll student off the field for the Blue Tornado. Helped his team advance to the Tennessee state semifinals this past year. Earned First Team Division-II-3A East/Middle Region honors as a senior. He is a three-star by 247Sports with a rating score of 80, ranking 53rd nationally at his position and 92th overall in the state. He chose WKU over nine others including Air Force, Charlotte and Navy.

Garland LaFrance – ★ ★ ★

5-10, 175, Running Back

St. Augustine HS (New Orleans, La.)

LaFrance played for recently-retired head coach Al Jones at St. Augustine High School, the same program as NFL stars Leonard Fournette and Tyrann Mathieu. Recorded the fastest recorded shuttle time in the nation (3.82) at the 2017 Nike Opening Combine. Rushed for 1,225 yards on 239 carries in his prep career with 10 touchdowns. Also added 207 receiving yards and 290 return yards for the Purple Knights. He is rated as a three-star with an 84 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 52nd overall in the state and 72nd nationally at his position. He chose WKU over 15 others including TCU, Texas Tech, Southern Miss, Tulane, Colorado State, Arkansas State and Toledo.

Tre Leslie – ★ ★ ★

6-0, 225, Linebacker

Tucker HS (Tucker, Ga.)

Leslie played for head coach Bryan Lamar at Tucker High School, and was an Honor Roll Student off the field for the Knights. Made 116 tackles combined in his junior and senior seasons, with 10 tackles for loss, three forced fumbles and an interception. He is rated as a three-star with an 81 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 80th nationally at his position and 180th overall in the state. He chose WKU over Appalachian State, Middle Tennessee and Georgia Southern.

WKU FOOTBALL 2018 SIGNING CLASS

Cardavion Myers – ★ ★ ★
5-11, 175, Defensive Back
Piedmont HS (Piedmont, Ala.)

Myers played for head coach Steve Smith at Piedmont High School, leading the Bulldogs to the Alabama state semifinals this past year. He was a team captain on the field and an Honor Roll student in the classroom. Accumulated 184 tackles - including 14 for loss - with 12 interceptions, 31 pass breakups, four forced fumbles and five fumble recoveries in his first three seasons of varsity ball. Played primarily quarterback as a senior, with 896 yards and 13 touchdowns passing to go along with 1,071 yards and 16 touchdowns rushing. As a junior, also put up 646 yards and eight touchdowns receiving. Adding 482 kick return yards, he finished his high school career with 3,204 all-purpose yards. He is rated as a three-star with an 81 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 70th overall in the state and 183rd nationally at his position. He chose WKU over 14 others including Tulane, Appalachian State, Toledo, Southern Miss and Middle Tennessee.

Malik Occiur – ★ ★ ★
6-1, 200, Defensive Back
Northeast HS (Oakland Park, Fla.)

Occiur played for head coach L.D. Anderson at Northeast High School, and was an Honor Roll student off the field for the Hurricanes. Had 146 tackles, two defensive touchdowns, two blocked punts and two forced fumbles in his sophomore and junior seasons combined. He is rated as a three-star with an 81 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 152nd nationally at his position and 320th overall in the state. He chose WKU over Florida Atlantic and Appalachian State.

Jayden Patterson – ★ ★
6-0, 185, Defensive Back
Mountain View HS (Lawrenceville, Ga.)

Patterson played for head coach Nick Bach at Mountain View High School, and was an Honor Roll student off the field for the Bears. As a senior, he made 65 tackles with four interceptions and 24 pass breakups. He earned Second Team All-Region 6-A-A-A-A-A-A and was a three-time Gwinnett Daily Post Defensive Honor Roll honoree during his high school career. He is rated as a two-star with a 78 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 252nd nationally at his position and 265th overall in the state. He chose WKU over Ball State and Georgia Southern.

Deporess Schletty – ★ ★ ★
6-2, 275, Defensive Line
Alpharetta HS (Alpharetta, Ga.)

Schletty played for head coach Jacob Nichols at Alpharetta High School, as the Raiders advanced to the Georgia state quarterfinals this past year. In two years of varsity ball, he had 51 tackles including 9.5 for loss - and 4.5 sacks, while forcing three fumbles as a senior. He is rated as a three-star with an 81 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 155th nationally at his position and 194th overall in the state. He chose WKU over 20 others including Pittsburgh, Syracuse, Colorado State, Appalachian State, Tulane, USF and Toledo.

WKU FOOTBALL 2018 SIGNING CLASS

Anthony Spurlock – ★ ★ ★
6-1, 160, Wide Receiver
Edna Carr HS (New Orleans, La.)

Spurlock played for head coach Brice Brown at Edna Carr High School, helping lead the Cougars to back-to-back 4A State Championships. He is rated as a three-star with an 82 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 75th overall in the state and 273rd nationally at his position. He chose WKU over five others including Oregon State and Troy.

Nazir Sy – ★ ★ ★
6-2, 320, Defensive Line
Norcross HS (Norcross, Ga.)

Sy played for head coach Keith Maloof at Norcross High School. In his career for the Blue Devils, he amassed 38 tackles for loss - including 16 in each of his final two seasons. Playing varsity since his sophomore year, he also tallied 146 total tackles and 12.5 sacks. He is rated as a three-star with an 81 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 139th nationally at his position and 181st overall in the state. He chose WKU over Wisconsin, Memphis, East Carolina and Tulane.

Lichon Terrell – ★ ★ ★
6-2, 280, Defensive Line
Callaway HS (Hogansville, Ga.)

Terrell played for head coach Pete Wiggins at Callaway High School and was a team captain, helping the Cavaliers advance to the Georgia state quarterfinals this past year. He had 47 tackles - including 15 for loss - and five sacks as a senior. He is rated as a three-star with an 84 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 93rd nationally at his position and 128th overall in the state. He chose WKU over 23 others including Iowa State, Mississippi State, UConn, East Carolina and Tulane.

Kevaris Thomas – ★ ★ ★ ★
6-4, 250, Quarterback
Lakeland HS (Lakeland, Fla.)

Thomas played for head coach Bill Castle at Lakeland HS and was a team captain, leading the Dreadnaughts to the Florida state semifinals this past year. As a junior, he threw for 1,606 yards with 16 touchdowns while adding 282 yards and three scores on the ground, as he took his squad all the way to the Class 6A state title game. He is rated as a four-star with an 87 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 22nd nationally at his position and 108th overall in the state. He chose WKU over eight others including South Carolina, Temple, USF, FIU, Florida Atlantic and Colorado State.

WKU FOOTBALL 2018 SIGNING CLASS

Trey Urquhart – ★ ★ ★

6-0, 210, Linebacker

North Cobb HS (Kennesaw, Ga.)

Urquhart played for head coach Shane Queen at North Cobb High School and was a team captain. Tallied 86 tackles with three sacks and an interception this past year. As a junior, he racked up 69 tackles, four interceptions, two defensive touchdowns, nine pass breakups, five sacks and four tackles for loss as a junior and was named All-Region. He is rated as a three-star with an 80 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 154th nationally at his position and 202nd overall in the state. He chose WKU over eight others including Louisville, Tulane, Florida Atlantic, Appalachian State and Middle Tennessee.

Kawan Williams – ★ ★

6-0, 175, Wide Receiver

Beach HS (Savannah, Ga.)

Williams played for head coach Ulysses Hawthorne at Beach High School. He totaled 1,397 all-purpose yards in two years of varsity ball, with 62 rushes for 433 yards and eight touchdowns and 15 catches for 395 yards and four scores, while adding 385 kick return yards and three run-backs to go along with 143 punt return yards. Threw for 843 yards with 11 touchdowns as a senior, and added one interception for 42 yards as a junior. He is rated as a two-star with a 79 composite score by 247Sports, ranking 230th overall in the state and 370th nationally at his position. He chose WKU over Ball State, Coastal Carolina, Georgia Southern and Georgia State.

Mario Wright – ★ ★ ★

6-1, 220, Linebacker

Homewood-Flossmoor HS (Flossmoor, Ill.)

Wright played for head coach Craig Buzea at Homewood-Flossmoor High School and was a team captain. Was a two-year starter, as the Vikings went 21-3 over the past two years. Racked up 104 tackles - including 20 for loss - and four sacks playing varsity ball. He is a three-star by 247Sports with a rating score of 82, ranking 34th overall in the state and 52nd nationally at his position. He chose WKU over 12 others including Syracuse, Western Michigan, Colorado State and Northern Illinois.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / February 28, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

A tentative schedule for spring practice is attached.

WKU SET TO OPEN SPRING PRACTICE MARCH 20; CELEBRATE 100TH TEAM THIS FALL

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Second-year head coach Mike Sanford and his Hilltoppers are set to open their sophomore spring together on March 20 which will include 14 practices leading up to the Red vs. White Spring Game on April 21.

Admission and parking for the annual Red vs. White game will be free, and the game is slated for a 2 p.m. kickoff from Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium. Additional details on the game will be announced at a later date.

WKU will celebrate 100 years of football this fall as the 100th team takes the field for Western Kentucky University. WKU's first-ever team played one game in 1913, but due to three years off (1917-19) for World War I and three more (1943-45) for World War II, the 100th squad hits the field for the 2018 campaign.

In order to celebrate the 100th team, WKU will have various themed giveaways throughout the season as well as select an All-Century team, a portion of which will be decided by a fan vote later this year. The Hilltoppers return 15 starters from last year's AutoNation Cure Bowl team, including seven defensive starters led by All-Freshman teamer Devon Key at safety and seniors Evan Sayner and DeAndre Farris, all three Kentuckians. Offensively, WKU is looking to replace All-Conference and NFL Combine bound quarterback Mike White, the second player in program history to have multiple 4,000-yard passing season, as well as All-Conference guard Brandon Ray. In his place, WKU will have a five-man race for the position this spring, led by senior Drew Eckels, before adding a sixth in the fall in the program's first-ever four-star high school recruit in quarterback Kevaris Thomas.

Where the Hilltoppers are not in need of a replacement this spring is at punter with the return of rising senior All-Conference performer Jake Collins. Collins allowed fewer than one punt return per game last season while his yards per return and total yards allowed were both top 40 marks nationally.

In 2017, the growing process began for WKU as 11 true freshman saw game action and 24 players earned their first career start. Rising sophomore stars like Roger Cray and DeAngelo Malone on defense, along with Jacquez Sloan and Cole Spencer on offense, mean this spring will be as critical as ever for WKU's bid to return to a bowl game for the seventh consecutive season.

And, in 2018 at home, it will all happen under brand new, state-of-the-art, high definition video boards from DakTronics which are being installed this offseason and increasing the viewing size of the screen by nearly 400 percent.

2018 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

#	Day	Post-Practice Media Availability	On Field (<i>Approx.</i>)
1.	Tuesday, March 20	Mike Sanford, two players	5:45 p.m.
2.	Thursday, March 22	Select assistants and players	5:15 p.m.
3.	Saturday, March 24	Mike Sanford, select assistants and players	10 a.m.
4.	Tuesday, March 27	Offensive assistants and players	5:45 p.m.
5.	Thursday, March 29	Defensive assistants and players	5:15 p.m.
6.	Saturday, March 31	Mike Sanford	10 a.m.
7.	Tuesday, April 3	Offensive assistants and players	5:45 p.m.
8.	Thursday, April 5	Defensive assistants and players	5:15 p.m.
9.	Saturday, April 7	Mike Sanford	10 a.m.
10.	Tuesday, April 10	Offensive assistants and players	5:45 p.m.
11.	Thursday, April 12	Defensive assistants and players	5:15 p.m.
12.	Saturday, April 14	Mike Sanford	10 a.m.
13.	Tuesday, April 17	Select assistants and players	5:45 p.m.
14.	Thursday, April 19	Select assistants and players	5:15 p.m.
15.	Saturday, April 21 – SPRING GAME, 2 p.m. (Normal post-game availability)		

Times are subject to change. All practices are closed.

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 closed as in the fall, video and photography by media members is allowed for the stretch, individual periods. Team periods are available by request. Media members should stay on the east side of Houchens-Smith Stadium unless escorted by a member of the WKU Media Relations staff. Please enter the stadium from the concourse on the east side.

MEDIA POLICIES FOR PRO DAY – MARCH 30

WKU will host a Pro Day on **Friday, March 30**. 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.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / March 19, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

WKU's complete spring guide is attached.

HILLTOPPERS OPEN 2018 SPRING PRACTICES ON TUESDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — As construction continues high above Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium on new video boards, the action ramps up on the field on Tuesday as WKU opens up spring practice for the 2018 season.

Under second-year head coach, the process has already begun to replace 11 starters, including seven on offense, but is bolstered by 15 returning starters and 55 lettermen from last year's Cure Bowl team.

The biggest question this fall will be who is taking the snaps from rising senior center Dennis Edwards, a three-year starter. Since 2010, few teams in the nation have been as fortunate as the Hilltoppers at the quarterback position. Only Troy has had fewer opening day starters (two) than WKU's three. Florida-born Kawaun Jakes called the signals from 2010-12 before handing over the reins to Florida-born Brandon Doughty from 2013-15. Then, in 2016, following Doughty's graduation, in stepped - you guessed it - Florida-born Mike White for the next two seasons.

This spring, Florida-born senior Drew Eckels will look to fend off competition from non-Floridians in Steven Duncan, Davis Shanley, and Graydon Kulick, for the starting job before Florida-born four-star quarterback Kevaris Thomas, the highest-ranked high school recruit to sign with WKU, steps on campus this fall.

Defensively, despite the graduation of four-year starter Derik Overstreet at end, Joe Brown at corner, Chris Johnson at tackle, and linebacker Joel Iyiegbuniwe's early entrance to the NFL Draft, defensive coordinator Clayton White has to be happy with what he has coming back on his side of the ball which also includes seven total starters.

The Hilltoppers return two all-conference caliber safeties in Drell Greene and Devon Key and will have pieces in place for one of the better defensive lines on The Hill in the last five seasons as tackles Evan Sayner and Jalen Madden along with end Carson Jordan return from injury. Rising sophomore DeAngelo Malone made an immediate impact as a true freshman last season, and this spring will be crucial for his growth into one of C-USA's top rush ends. Factor in the addition of redshirt freshmen C.J. Marria and Juwuan Jones and senior Julien Lewis, who closed the 2017 campaign strong, and the pieces are in place for a feisty defense in year two of White's 4-2-5 scheme.

There will also be a new look on the Hilltopper staff as various roles have been added along with the addition of new offensive line coach TJ Woods. Sanford intends to take a more hands-on approach to the quarterbacks this season and will be aided with the addition of Matthew Mitchell as quarterbacks coach. Mitchell spent the 2017 campaign working with offensive coordinator Junior Adams and the wide receivers and worked in the quarterbacks room with Sanford at Notre Dame.

Jami DeBerry and Maurice Crum have added special teams coordinating duties to their roles this spring while Jimmy Lindsey has added the title of recruiting coordinator.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / March 24, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Mike Sanford Recaps Week 1: <https://youtu.be/GtqLaNBL vo>



[WKU FB](#)
[HC Mike](#)
[Sanford](#)
[3-24-18](#)

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[YouTube](#)

youtu.be

HILLTOPPERS WRAP UP FIRST WEEK OF SPRING PRACTICES

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — One week in and three practices down, WKU second-year head coach Mike Sanford likes what he has seen from the Hilltoppers.

WKU puts on the pads for the first time this spring camp on Saturday, and Sanford came away impressed by his team's energy and competitiveness.

"It's been competitive," Sanford said. "I like the way we're coming out and ready to work the last three days. I like how we've responded to varying weather conditions. There's a lot of new faces and so this is a team that is a work in progress. There are some exciting pieces, and some veterans who you expect to make plays."

As to be expected from a defense which returns seven starters and has a wealth of experience in the secondary, defensive back play was at its highest level in the first day of padded practices.

"(Defensive back) Ta'corian Darden got his hands on two balls that were defensive touchdowns because of turnovers," Sanford added. "We're really emphasizing turnovers and takeaways a lot and ball security offensively. We're making it competitive through the week. We went full pads and mixed in some situations where we had 'money' downs with everything on the line and having pads on makes it more realistic."

Each spring, the coaching staff must find new leadership as seniors depart from the program, and Sanford alluded to some leaders starting to emerge, particularly from an offense which does not return the starting quarterback.

"Offensively, Lucky Jackson has emerged as a leader on the field and in the way he's carrying himself. Xavier Lane and Marquez Trigg are others guys who are standing out. Up front, Dennis Edwards, I'd say, is a guy we need and has continued to show more as a leader. He's played a lot of football here and has been a part of a lot of winning teams and winning games."

WKU returns to practice on Tuesday, their fourth of the spring season.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / March 30, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

A pair of photos from today's Pro Day are attached. Credit Steve Roberts/WKU Athletics

Mike Sanford - <https://youtu.be/DUFk8eZ7Dpg>

Mike White - <https://youtu.be/OU4zGXeh4-A>

Nacarius Fant - <https://youtu.be/DUFk8eZ7Dpg>

Deon Yelder - <https://youtu.be/bC-iT-qRz8U>

NFL SCOUTS TURN OUT IN DROVES FOR HILLTOPPER PRO DAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — As has become the tradition each spring on The Hill, NFL team representatives turned out in droves on Friday to watch WKU's annual Pro Day as 14 former Hilltoppers chased their NFL futures.

Thirty-five representatives from 28 teams turned out in all as Hilltopper standouts Mike White, Joel Iyiebuniwe, and Deon Yelder put on a show along with nine of their teammates from the 2017 squad as well as two Hilltoppers from the class of 2016.

"I'm really proud of our guys," said head coach Mike Sanford. "You can tell they've put in the work. For some of these guys, this is a life-altering type of a day. In particular, guys who didn't have a chance to compete in the combine, namely Deon Yelder, I think he did incredible stuff for himself today. He had a phenomenal workout for a guy you can tell who has put in the work. The highlight for me was watching (Mike White) do some great stuff in the red zone."

For Yelder, a former four-year walk-on who earned a scholarship prior to his senior season in 2017, it was an feather-in-the-cap type of morning as he continues his ascent up team draft boards. On the day, Yelder's measurements in a number of categories would have ranked among the top five with his position group at the 2018 NFL Scouting Combine: 120" broad jump (t-4th), 4.74 40-yard dash (t-3rd), 18 bench press reps (t-5th), 33" vertical jump (t-5th).

White and Iyiebuniwe both participated in position drills, using their times from the Combine as their measurements for the draft process. For White, the day was as much about showcasing his ability to place the football exactly where he wants it as it was enjoying one final time on the field with his teammates.

"I told the guys 'Let's just have fun. It's our last time playing anything somewhat competitive in this stadium all together.' I just wanted to have fun," White said. "When you have fun, it takes the high pressure situation out of it. I wanted to treat it like it was just another day in the summer, preparing for fall camp. There were just a few more people watching. I wanted to go out and have fun, and I think we accomplished that."

As WKU's profile has grown in NFL circles, so too has the attendance at Pro Day as NFL teams know there will regularly be NFL talent coming out of the program as evidenced by eight draft selections since 2013.

"It's awesome (to have NFL scouts here)," Sanford added. "It motivates all of us. It motivates the young players out here. A lot of these guys working out here today, I remember they were watching this last year waiting for their opportunity. It also motivates me as a head coach and as assistant coaches to be recruiting and bringing in talent so that you can have Pro Days where you're bringing in all 32 NFL teams. I want this program to be (a conduit to the NFL) year in and year out."

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 26-28 from Arlington, Texas at the Dallas Cowboy's AT&T Stadium.



WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / March 30, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Two action photos of Jason Veltkamp are attached.

JASON VELTKAMP TABBED TO LEAD HILLTOPPER FOOTBALL STRENGTH PROGRAM

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Head Football Coach Mike Sanford has tabbed Jason Veltkamp to lead the Hilltoppers in the weight room, the program announced on Thursday.

“We are thrilled to add Jason Veltkamp to our staff and lead our strength and conditioning program. Not only will he be an incredible leader of men in the weight room, he will also be an effective and highly influential person in their lives off the field. Jason has a wealth of experience leading programs to New Year’s Six bowl games, and his expertise in injury prevention will be an invaluable resource for our team. He is also a great motivator who will prepare our players to succeed at the highest level.”

Veltkamp comes to The Hill with over 20 years of of experience both professionally and collegiately with stops at the Cleveland Browns, North Carolina State, Arkansas, Utah, and Louisville, including serving as the strength and conditioning director at the latter four stops. Under his direction, Veltkamp’s programs have reached three New Year’s Six (then BCS) bowl games including: 2007 Orange Bowl (Louisville), 2011 Sugar Bowl (Arkansas) and 2012 Cotton Bowl (Arkansas).

Over his 20-plus year career in the field, Veltkamp has worked with and developed 58 NFL Draft selections including four NFL first-round draft picks in defensive tackle Amobe Okoye (Houston), offensive tackle Jordan Gross (Carolina), quarterback Alex Smith (San Francisco) and offensive guard Eric Wood (Buffalo). Veltkamp also helped develop basketball center Andrew Bogut (Milwaukee) and has trained other professional athletes offensive linemen Travis Swanson (Detroit) and Breno Giacomini (Houston), defensive linemen Elvis Dumervil (San Francisco) and Chris Smith (Cleveland), defensive backs Josh Jones (Green Bay), Eric Weddle (Baltimore), and William Gay (Pittsburgh), quarterback Ryan Mallett (Baltimore), wide receiver Jarius Wright (Minnesota) and running back Matt Dayes (Cleveland).

Veltkamp spent three seasons as the head football strength and conditioning coach at North Carolina State (2013-15) which coincided with two bowl appearances and the careers of quarterback Jacoby Brissett and Joe Thuney. Following his career at NC State, Thuney went on to be drafted by the New England Patriots and earn PFWA All-Rookie Team honors and a Super Bowl LI Championship in the 2016 season.

In 2015, Veltkamp was honored by the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association with “Master” designation, the highest honor given in the strength and conditioning profession.

Prior to NC State, Veltkamp spent eight years with former WKU head coach Bobby Petrino at two stops, first at Louisville (2004-07) then at Arkansas (2008-12), both in the capacity of head strength and conditioning coach. The run at Louisville and Arkansas included six bowl games and two conference championships at Louisville.

From 2001-03, the Bozeman, Mont., native was the director of strength and conditioning at the University of Utah under head coaches Urban Meyer and Ron McBride after working as a strength and conditioning assistant from 1999-2000.

During his tenure with the Utes, the football team won two Mountain West Conference championships, earned three bowl bids and had wins over Southern California in the 2001 Las Vegas Bowl and Southern Mississippi in the 2003 Liberty Bowl. The men’s basketball team also won three conference titles and earned three NCAA Tournament bids with Veltkamp organizing its workouts.

Veltkamp began his career in 1995 as a student assistant and volunteer coach working with the offensive line at Carroll College in Helena, Mont. In 1996, he moved into the strength and conditioning field as the coach for the Helena Ice Pirates Junior "A" hockey team for the 1996 season.

He returned to Carroll and assisted with spring practice before working at Utah State as a strength and conditioning graduate assistant from 1997-98. His time at USU saw him work with 14 sports, including football, basketball, volleyball and track.

A graduate of Carroll College, Veltkamp was a four-year starter for the Fighting Saints, playing for Bob Petrino, Sr. He was a two-time all-conference performer in 1993 and 1994 and was also a team captain on the 1994 team.

Veltkamp earned his master's degree in exercise science from Utah State in 1998 and is certified by the National Strength and Conditioning Association. He is also a member of the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association and American Football Coaches Association.

Veltkamp and his wife, Kristen, have two sons, Caden and Colton.

THE VELTKAMP FILE

PERSONAL

Born: June 1, 1973

Hometown: Bozeman, Mont.

College: Carroll College, '95

Wife: Kristen

Children: Caden and Colton

PLAYING CAREER (Offensive Line – Center)

College: Carroll (1991-94)

COACHING CAREER

1995-96: Carroll College (Offensive Line Coach)

1997-98: Utah State (Strength and Conditioning Graduate Assistant)

1999-01: Utah (Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach)

2001-03: Utah (Director of Strength and Conditioning)

2004-07: Louisville (Head Football Strength and Conditioning Coach)

2008-12: Arkansas (Head Strength and Conditioning Coach)

2013-15: North Carolina State (Head Football Strength and Conditioning Coach)

2016-17: Cleveland Browns (Strength and Conditioning Coordinator)

2018: WKU (Director of Football Strength and Conditioning)

BOWL EXPERIENCE

1997: Humanitarian (Utah State, Coach)

1999: Las Vegas (Utah, Coach)

2001: Las Vegas (Utah, Coach)

2003: Liberty (Utah, Coach)

2004: Liberty (Louisville, Coach)

2005: Gator (Louisville, Coach)

2006: Orange (Louisville, Coach)

2009: Liberty (Arkansas, Coach)

2010: Sugar (Arkansas, Coach)

2011: Cotton (Arkansas, Coach)

2014: St. Petersburg (NC State, Coach)

2015: Belk (NC State, Coach)





WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / March 31, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Mike Sanford – <https://youtu.be/vptppRyuN8Q>

[YouTube](#)

youtu.be



HILLTOPPERS COMPLETE WEEK TWO OF SPRING FOOTBALL

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — A day after welcoming 35 representatives from 28 NFL teams for the program's annual Pro Day, the WKU Hilltoppers closed out their second week of spring practice with a scrimmage under clear blue skies over Feix Field.

"It's been good – today was highly, highly competitive," Sanford said of the six practices so far. "I think some guys let off a little steam today which is good. I'm excited about [their desire to] compete. You love for your team to come out with the mindset every day wanting to compete, and I think today was our best day so far."

As in the case each spring, new leaders and playmakers must emerge after a senior class departs from the program. This spring is no different for WKU as they look to replace the production and leadership of players like Mike White, Deon Yelder, and Joel Iyiebuniwe.

"(Freshman running back) Josh Samuel has been really impressive. It's great to have him back. He was a big part of our signing class when we first got here. Without question, Drell Green is one of our most talented, if not our most talented, athletes and is really now starting to become a veteran leader. Juwuan Jones was a redshirt last year, so it's always good when young guys who nobody in town knows about but we've had our eyes on starts to pop."

Of the race to replace White under center, it has been a three-man race for much of spring with senior Drew Eckels, sophomore Steven Duncan, and freshman Davis Shanley all competing this spring.

"It's been really good. We're going to be competitive with (that race). It's going to be like that for a while. You look at the quarterback competition every single day – and that's going to make us better – but there are days when you think you have it figured out and realize you just have to give guys reps. You have to continue to give guys reps, let them work through it, and don't throw in the towel too soon and let them work through what they're working through."

The Hilltoppers are back on the practice field on Tuesday as they begin their third week of spring football leading up to April 21 for the Red vs. White Spring Game. Admission and parking for the game are free.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 6, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Mike Sanford post-practice: https://youtu.be/oFIPD_NRibq

[YouTube](#)

youtu.be



WEEK THREE CLOSES OUT WITH TEAM SCRIMMAGE ON FRIDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Week three of spring practices were closed out with a 60-play team scrimmage on Friday under the lights of Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium.

As head coach Mike Sanford looks to find a new starting quarterback to replace NFL-bound Mike White, Friday's performance was a telling sign that the position group still has work to do.

"(The scrimmage) was good, but we've got to clean it up at the quarterback position," Sanford said. "We did some good stuff, but our (first team) offense scored on the first drive – nice drive – and matriculated the ball right down the field but it was slow after that. We've got to coach them better. We've got to play better."

In his first practice since being named assistant head coach, Clayton White's defense was the beneficiary of numerous footballs on the ground, another area Sanford said his offense needed to improve.

"I thought our defense created turnovers, mostly through the offense's exchanges. We've got to clean that up. It wasn't up to our standard at the quarterback position. We've been pretty good until today. There were moments which were good, but overall not our best day at the position."

Not only is White's production gone, but his departure, among others, leaves a void in the leadership roles, and the spring has been a time historically for new leaders to emerge.

"We need leaders to emerge, offensively. We, as coaches, have been the leaders, but it's on Dennis Edwards, Drew Eckels, Lucky Jackson, guys who have played who have street and field credibility. When you have turnovers or three-and-outs, we need guys to galvanize and bring everyone together. That's the big challenge."

The Hilltoppers are back on the field on Tuesday to start the fourth week of spring practices, all leading up to April 21 for the Red vs. White Spring Game at 2 p.m. Admission and parking are free.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 6, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

White's headshot and an action photo are attached.

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR CLAYTON WHITE ADDS ASSISTANT HEAD COACH TITLE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Second-year defensive coordinator Clayton White has added the title of Assistant Head Coach, WKU head football coach Mike Sanford announced on Friday.

"Clayton's contributions to our program go much further than the defensive meeting room, and with the respect he carries inside the locker room from both sides of the ball, this is a much deserved title," Sanford said. "I am excited for our defense's continued growth under his direction."

A 2017 Frank Broyles Award nominee for the nation's top assistant coach and a 16-year coaching veteran, White enters his second season as defensive coordinator and cornerbacks coach on The Hill. During White's first campaign as the defensive playcaller, the Hilltoppers enjoyed a historic stretch, holding opponents to their fewest point totals through the season's first seven games in 15 years and a record over that span in the FBS era. As injuries claimed starters along the defensive front and secondary, White's coaching in the cornerbacks room developed DeAndre Farris from a backup into one of the nation's top pass defenders.

The pass defense was also one of the nation's stingiest in allowing passing touchdowns as opposing teams found the end zone just 11 times through the air all season against the Hilltoppers, a mark which ranked No. 5 nationally and just three off the nation's top mark. It was the fewest touchdown passes allowed by a WKU team since the 2001 team also allowed just 11 touchdown passes and four fewer than the previous FBS-era low.

Farris' 15 passes defended, the fifth-most in a single season in program history and tied for the most in the FBS era, ranked No. 36 nationally and No. 2 among C-USA defensive backs. For his efforts, Farris was named All-Conference USA Honorable Mention along with the corner opposite him, Joe Brown. Due in large part to the tenacity of the defensive backfield in White's 4-2-5 scheme, the Hilltoppers finished ranked No. 40 nationally in pass defense – an improvement of 79 spots from the previous season - and No. 4 in pass-happy C-USA, allowing just 206.8 yards per game through the air, the fewest by a WKU team since the 2013 squad. All four starters in the defensive secondary received postseason accolades as safeties Drell Greene (All-C-USA Honorable Mention) and Devon Key (All-Freshman team) picked up mentions.





WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 11, 2018

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Head shot attached, please credit WKU Athletics if used.

MARCUS WARD NAMED TO 2018 NFF HAMPSHIRE HONOR SOCIETY

[NFF Full Press Release](#)

IRVING, Texas — Former WKU Football student-athlete Marcus Ward has earned his place as a 2018 National Football Foundation Hampshire Honor Society member, it was announced Wednesday morning. Ward achieved at least a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 during his entire Hilltopper career.

Ward finished his career on The Hill with 143 tackles across 137 games played. The safety racked up 9.5 tackles for loss, 13 passes defended and a pair of interceptions. From 2013-17, WKU boasted a 45-21 overall record. The Hilltoppers won back-to-back Conference USA Championships in 2015 and 2016, and had three consecutive bowl wins from 2014-16.

A leader for WKU on and off the field, Ward graduated with a bachelor's degree in Accounting in 2016, and was pursuing a master's degree in the same field of study in his final year of eligibility. He was previously honored by the NFF in both 2016 and 2017 as a William V. Campbell Trophy semifinalist, which recognizes the absolute best football scholar-athlete in the nation.

In August 2017, the Birmingham, Alabama, native attended the Campbell Trophy Summit in Stanford, California. The three-day event gathered individuals committed to practicing authentic leadership, sharing powerful concepts and exchanging ideas to foster personal growth and empowerment. Featured guests included Campbell Trophy participants plus distinguished entrepreneurs, CEO's and friends who benefited from Bill Campbell's passion and purpose.

An all-time high 1,251 players from a record-tying 302 schools qualified for membership in the society's 12th year. The initiative has now honored 8,994 student-athletes since its inception, and the program has experienced growth every year in either members or school participation since its launch in 2007.

"We are pleased to see another record number of athletes honored by the Hampshire Honor Society this year," NFF President and CEO Steve Hatchell said. "Over the past decade, it has become a powerful vehicle for schools to recognize their college football players who have distinguished themselves both academically and athletically, and we congratulate the schools and each of these young men for their commitment to excellence in all aspects of their lives."

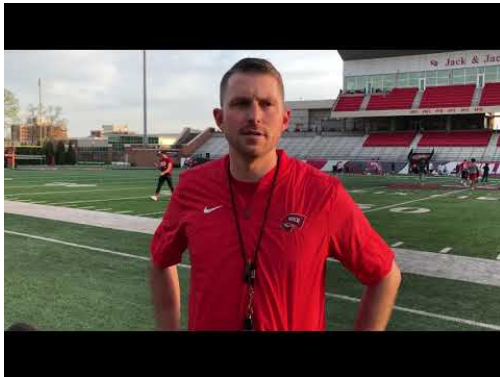


WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 13, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Mike Sanford - <https://youtu.be/HOHU-DECAXY>



[WKU FB](#)
[HC Mike](#)
[Sanford](#)
[4-13-18 -](#)
[YouTube](#)

youtu.be

YOUNG HILLTOPPERS EARNING VALUABLE SNAPS IN WEEK 4

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — With a number of projected starters recovering from postseason surgeries this spring, a young crop of WKU Hilltoppers have found themselves amongst the rest of the starters through the first four weeks of practice.

For second-year head coach Mike Sanford, this is a valuable time for his team's future contributors and stars to emerge and provide immediate depth as early as August 31 when the Hilltoppers kick off the 2018 season at Wisconsin.

"It's going to be nice to get (the starters) back, but on the flipside, we have gotten so many guys reps who, quite frankly, wouldn't have gotten any had it not been for the surgeries," Sanford said. "You're developing a lot of depth. Last spring, Devon Key got a majority of the reps [at safety] because Marcus Ward was coming back from injury and look what happened to his season. It's hard to evaluate where we are because we are missing a lion's share of our starters on defense but I like the progress we're making."

As they have done each of the past three weeks, WKU closed out the week with a small sided scrimmage took a lighter approach on Friday after an extended scrimmage on the grass practice fields on Thursday.

"We got a really good practice in last night so today was going to be a lighter scrimmage. It was a good opportunity for our two younger quarterbacks [to get snaps]. Drew Eckels had a death in the family, and we wanted him to be with his family. So, it was a great opportunity for Davis and Steve to get some reps with the ones. You like to see that and see how guys respond and evaluate it."

Another young Hilltopper ready to step into the spotlight this season earned additional praise in former walk-on linebacker Ben Holt. With the departure of Joel Iyiegbuniwe to the NFL, Holt is expected to step in as a starter in his junior season.

"Every time on film when you watch him, if gets blocked he's immediately calling up a flag, saying it's holding. He's mad. He's angry. He makes so many plays in practice. The rare opportunity we do truly get

our hands on him and sustain the block, he's irate. And that's what you want, and that's what I told the team."

The Hilltoppers have just two practices remaining before Saturday, April 21st for the annual Red vs. White Scrimmage, set for 2 p.m. from Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium. Admission and parking is free.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 19, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

HILLTOPPERS SET FOR SATURDAY'S RED VS. WHITE SPRING GAME

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Spring football with spring weather – we hope – comes to a close on Saturday as WKU hosts its annual Red vs. White Spring Game at 2 p.m. inside Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium.

It has been a spring of transition for the Hilltoppers under second-year head coach Mike Sanford. After making the program's fourth consecutive bowl trip, the Hilltoppers are searching for a new starter at quarterback with the departure of two-year starter Mike White, as well as consistency from its offensive line, depth at wide receiver, and scattered new starters throughout a youthful defense.

The program also welcomed two new coaches to The Hill this spring in offensive line coach TJ Woods and head strength coach Jason Veltkamp as well as promoted offensive graduate assistant Matt Mitchell to quarterbacks coach.

While the work will continue into the summer and fall ahead of an August 31 opener at Wisconsin, Saturday's spring game will be an opportunity for the quarterbacks to display their skillset as they will each lead teams.

On one side, senior Drew Eckels and sophomore Steven Duncan will command their offense while freshman Davis Shanley has the sole reins of the other side. Scoring during the Red vs. White game will be dictated based on the quarterback under center, and defensive scores will count for the opposite 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 will welcome back seniors from last year's Cure Bowl team.

Parking and admission for the game is free. Gates open at Noon.

RED, WHITE, AND BREW 2018

In conjunction with the game, WKU's Alumni Association and Young Alumni Council will hold its annual Red, White, and Brew fest from 2 -5 p.m. across the street on south lawn, featuring craft beers and local wines. Event attendees will also have access to a special viewing area for the Red vs. White Game, and an event ticket includes access to vendors and a complimentary meal.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

COMPLETE NUTRITION STUDENT COMBINE

Complete Nutrition is kicking the day off at 11 a.m. with the first-ever Complete Nutrition Hilltopper Student Combine where WKU students will have the chance to compare their results to those of the Hilltoppers in the pros on Feix Field.

The event will run from 11 a.m. to Noon.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 21, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Two photos are attached. Please credit WKU Athletics.

Mike Sanford: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qo45E_paSJ4

QB Drew Eckels: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKyS_qiN2zU

WR Xavier Lane: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy9Nvble7P0>

DB Drell Greene: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mq_tDRw7Xyl

HILLTOPPERS CLOSE OUT SPRING WITH HEALTHY 90-PLAY SCRIMMAGE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU closed out the 2018 spring practice season in the best possible fashion, a healthy one, on Saturday as the program worked through a 90-play scrimmage under perfect weather for the annual Red vs. White game.

The Red team, led by quarterbacks Drew Eckels and Steven Duncan, ousted the White team, led by Davis Shanley and Graydon Kulick, 24-14 in what second-year head coach Mike Sanford called a positive and steady scrimmage to end the spring.

“Spring game, beautiful day, great to have the fan base out here, it was a fun game,” Sanford said.

“Obviously, it wasn’t a traditional spring game, tackle, playing with two true teams, but the work we wanted to get out of it we absolutely got out of it. We got 92 plays in the scrimmage. We wanted to make sure every single person on our roster got a rep today and that was good to see. Overall, I’m pleased with what I saw.”

As the Hilltoppers worked this spring to implement their quarterback-driven run game, the three quarterbacks competing for the starting job worked tirelessly to improve their ground game. It showed on Saturday.

Eckels, Duncan and Shanley combined to rush for nearly 100 yards on designed runs and scrambles, but it didn’t come at the expense of the passing game. During the first half, when the clock ran like a traditional game, WKU combined to put up a balanced 520 yards of offense with 237 yards coming from the ground game which has seen drastic improvement this spring.

During the scrimmage’s first half, WKU ball carriers averaged 6.6 yards per carry.

“I feel like we’re taking a step in the right direction,” Eckels said. “As a senior, you have to lead the team in the right ways and I feel like we did that today, all the seniors came around. I feel like the offense is coming to its final piece. We’ve just got camp, a few fundamentals and then we should be good.”

Now the Hilltoppers turn their attention to finishing up classes this spring before summer conditioning begins under new strength coach Jason Veltkamp and his staff. The Hilltoppers open the season on Friday, Aug. 31 at Wisconsin.





WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 23, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

An updated schedule as of today is attached.

TWO GAMES ADDED TO CBS SPORTS NETWORK SCHEDULE; HOMECOMING ANNOUNCED

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Two games in the 100th season of WKU Football have been added to the CBS Sports Network national broadcast schedule, and Homecoming on The Hill has been tabbed for the FIU game.

Road games at Louisiana Tech and at Middle Tennessee have been picked up by league broadcast partner CBS Sports Network. To accommodate the move the television, the game at Middle Tennessee previously slated for Saturday, Nov. 3 has been moved to Friday, Nov. 2.

WKU's regular season finale at Louisiana Tech (Nov. 24) remains unchanged.

Homecoming will also be held around a visit from the FIU Panthers on Saturday, Oct. 27. 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.

After wrapping up spring practices over the weekend, the Hilltoppers are headed toward summer conditioning leading up to an Aug. 31 season kick off at Wisconsin.

WKU 2018 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	TV	Location
Aug. 31 (Fri.)	at Wisconsin		Madison, Wisc.
Sept. 8	Maine		Bowling Green, Ky.
Sept. 15	at Louisville		Louisville, Ky.
Sept. 22	at Ball State		Muncie, Ind.
Sept. 29	Marshall*		Bowling Green, Ky.
<i>Oct. 6</i>	<i>BYE</i>		
Oct. 13	at Charlotte*		Charlotte, N.C.
Oct. 20	Old Dominion*		Bowling Green, Ky.
Oct. 27	FIU* (Homecoming)		Bowling Green, Ky.
Nov. 2 (Fri.)	at Middle Tennessee*	CBS SN	Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Nov. 10	at Florida Atlantic*		Boca Raton, Fla.
Nov. 17	UTEP*		Bowling Green, Ky.
Nov. 24	at Louisiana Tech*	CBS SN	Ruston, La.

Home games in **BOLD** | * Indicates Conference USA game

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 27, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Attached is an action photo and headshot of Martin.

FORMER LETTERMAN KENNY MARTIN PROMOTED TO FULL-TIME ASSISTANT ROLE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Former Hilltopper letterman and current defensive tackles graduate assistant coach Kenny Martin has been promoted to full-time assistant, head coach Mike Sanford announced on Friday.

“Kenny has done a tremendous job developing our interior defensive line, and I know he will continue to advance that group as we head into the 2018 season,” Sanford said. “He is already a passionate and enthusiastic coach, but there is an extra edge to Kenny when it comes to coaching for his alma mater. He will absolutely be able to convey that passion to recruits, particularly in his hometown areas of Orlando and Miami.”

Martin, who has spent the last two seasons on staff and directed the defensive tackles last season, lettered at defensive tackle from 2009-12 on The Hill and will continue in his current role as the leader of the defensive tackles group. He fills a spot vacated by the resignation of former assistant coach Geoff Dartt who returned home to Ohio for personal reasons.

“This a dream to be able to serve in this capacity at my alma mater,” Martin said. “My wife, Tasha, and I are extremely grateful to Coach Sanford and to the university for giving us this opportunity. I’ve been through a lot of the phases of this program, from the transition to the FBS as a player to winning a conference championship as a coach, and look forward to continuing the winning tradition here on The Hill.”

In his first season working with the defensive tackles, Martin's work with first-time starter Evan Sayner was showing major progress as Sayner was on pace for an All-Conference USA season before an injury sidelined him for the second half of the season. In his place, junior Julien Lewis emerged and grew into a stout run stopper by season's end, giving the Hilltoppers a promising interior presence heading into 2018. Senior Chris Johnson earned All-Conference USA honorable mention accolades after leading all WKU defenders in quarterback hurries from his tackle position. The Hilltoppers finished in the top half of C-USA rushing defenses despite losing two of their major run stuffers up front to season ending injuries in Sayner and freshman Jalen Madden.

In 2016, while working with the WKU linebackers, senior Keith Brown set an FBS single-season record for total tackles with 131 en-route to earning All-Conference USA First Team honors along with Pro Football Focus Second Team All-American honors. The Hilltoppers finished the campaign with the No. 2 ranked rushing defense, surrendering just 97.2 yards per game. Linebackers Joel Iyiegbuniwe and T.J. McCollum also added All-C-USA Honorable Mention honors. The Hilltoppers also led the conference in scoring defense as they won their second consecutive league championship and third consecutive bowl game.

A native of Orlando, Fla., Martin played in 48 games with 42 starts from 2009-12 and was a member of WKU's first-ever FBS bowl team in the 2012 Little Caesar's Pizza Bowl. He joins safeties coach Jami Deberry as Hilltopper lettermen now serving as full-time assistant coaches on staff, while graduate assistants Nelson Fishback, Garrett Schwettman, and Anthony Davis also all hold lettermen distinction within the program.

Prior to returning to The Hill, Martin was the defensive line coach at the University of Virginia-Wise. Martin also served as the defensive coordinator at Warren Central High School in Bowling Green. He got his start in coaching as the co-defensive coordinator and defensive line coach at his former high school, Ocoee High School, in Orlando. From Ocoee, Martin's former linebacker Terrell Lewis went on to sign and play with Georgia Tech while former Warren Central stars De'Vonte Barber, Wes Blomeier, and Shawn Jewell went on to collegiate programs, Kentucky Wesleyan, University of Cumberlands and Lindenwood-Belleville, respectively.

Martin is married to the former LaTasha Babb.

With Martin moving to the defensive tackles role full-time, defensive line coach Jimmy Lindsey will now serve as the defensive ends coach and retain the recruiting coordinator title.





WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / April 28, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Headshots and action shots for White and Iyiegbuniwe are attached.

HILLTOPPERS IYIEGBUNIWE AND WHITE SELECTED IN 2018 NFL DRAFT

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – For the third consecutive season, WKU produced multiple NFL draft selections as linebacker Joel Iyiegbuniwe (Chicago Bears) and quarterback Mike White (Dallas Cowboys) were selected in the fourth and fifth rounds, respectively.

Since 2016, WKU had produced seven NFL draft selections, tied for the most among all non-Power 5 schools and the most in Conference USA.

Iyiegbuniwe, who was born in Chicago and lived in Bolingbrook, Ill. before moving to Kentucky, returns home after being taken with the 115th overall selection in the fourth round. He became the sixth-highest draft pick and highest ever linebacker taken in WKU history in the common draft era (since 1967).

Iyiegbuniwe joins WKU legend Virgil Livers, one of four retired jerseys in the program, as draft selections from WKU by the Bears.

Like his former teammate, White became the highest draft selection at quarterback in WKU history when the Dallas Cowboys selected him with the 171st pick in the fifth round. Like Iyiegbuniwe, there is a connection to the program. Current Cowboys quarterback coach Kellen Moore and WKU head coach Mike Sanford are both Boise State alumni and share a familiarity through former Boise State head coach Chris Petersen. Moore was in attendance for White's Pro Day workout in Bowling Green earlier this spring.

White is the first Hilltopper to be drafted by the Cowboys.

Iyiegbuniwe and White are the 34th and 35th draft picks, respectively, from WKU. Complete biographies are below.

Next up, numerous Hilltoppers are expected to receive preferred contract offers from NFL teams as undrafted free agents. That path has served many former Hilltoppers well as evidenced by Jack Doyle, Antonio Andrews, Bobby Rainey, and George Fant, to name a few.

Linebacker Joel Iyiegbuniwe

Iyiegbuniwe elected to forgo his final season of eligibility on The Hill and put medical school on hold after spending four years in the program, becoming the first Hilltopper to do so since former defensive back Jonathan Dowling came out a year early for the 2014 NFL Draft. Like Dowling, Iyiegbuniwe's decision was rewarded as he was selected in the fourth round by the Chicago Bears.

Iyiegbuniwe capped what proved to be his final season on The Hill with a bang, leading WKU in tackles (117) and tackles for loss (11.5) en route to All-Conference USA First Team honors. Iyiegbuniwe's 200 career tackles are the sixth-most in a career in the FBS era and his 117 tackles on the season were the third-most in the FBS era. He tallied double-digit tackle performances five times on the year, including two 15-tackle games against Middle Tennessee and Marshall - the second-most in a game in the FBS era. Iyiegbuniwe closed the season with a bang as he racked up 49 tackles and 7.5 tackles for loss in the final four games of the season.

He began to make noise as a redshirt sophomore as he saw his role increase dramatically in 2016, starting all 14 games at outside linebacker for the Hilltoppers. He finished the year with 64 total tackles (39 solo), the fourth-most on the team and most among underclassmen. He added 10 tackles for loss, one of four Hilltoppers to record double-digit TFL numbers and one of two linebackers, which included

3.5 sacks. Iyiegbuniwe led the team at No. 1 Alabama with 10 tackles (seven solo). At Miami (Ohio), he forced his first career fumble and added five quarterback hurries and three pass breakups.

A prep star at multiple positions from South Warren High School in Bowling Green, Iyiegbuniwe elected to remain at home and attend WKU, signing with the program in 2014. WKU was, at the time, his only FBS offer.

Quarterback Mike White

White becomes WKU's second-ever quarterback drafted into the NFL, joining the man he replaced on The Hill, Brandon Doughty, with that distinction.

After beginning his career near his native Pembroke Pines at the University of South Florida, White transferred to WKU and sat out the 2015 season where he studied Doughty and refined his game. In 2016, he began his own assault on the WKU record books and left the program as one of the most decorated student-athletes in school history.

Over his two-year starting career, White set school records for passing attempts in a season (560, 2017), passer rating in a season (181.4, 2016), passer rating in a game (306.2, 2016) and won 17 games as the starter. Elsewhere, White is statistically No. 2 or No. 3 in every major passing category. During his first year as the starter, White led the nation's most potent scoring attack, setting a school record for point scored at 637 and average per game at 45.5. Three of the program's single-game highs for offensive output came with White at quarterback.

White capped his career on The Hill with eight consecutive 300-yard passing games, the longest streak in the nation. He finished fourth nationally with 4,177 yards and second with 560 attempts, while leading the country with 368 completions. The senior had at least 20 completions and 30 attempts in all 13 games. White accounted for 81.2 percent of the Hilltoppers' total offense through the air, leading to the No.7 passing offense in the nation. He led WKU with six rushing touchdowns, including a career-high two scores at UTEP.

Following the season, White became the first quarterback in program history to receive an invitation from the Senior Bowl and was the second field general to earn an invite to the NFL Scouting Combine.

White finished third in program history with 8,540 passing yards and fourth with 648 career completions, meanwhile his 368 completions in 2017 were the third-most in a WKU single-season.

Noted for his accuracy and decision making, he set a single-season Hilltopper record by going 161 passes in-between interceptions.









WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / May 2, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Head Coach Mike Sanford - <https://youtu.be/IADEvHeE-dA>



[WKU FB HC Mike Sanford 5-2-18 - YouTube](https://youtu.be/IADEvHeE-dA)

youtu.be

To learn more about WKU Athletics, visit www.WKUSports.com or follow us on Twitter via @WKUSports, Facebook at facebook.com/WKUAthletics and Instagram at ins...

SANFORD RECAPS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL NFL DRAFT WEEKEND FOR HILLTOPPERS

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Another successful NFL Draft weekend has passed for the WKU Hilltoppers as two former student-athletes heard their names called in the draft, Joel Iyiebuniwe (4th, Chicago Bears) and Mike White (5th, Dallas Cowboys) and a third, tight end Deon Yelder, received the highest reported value for an undrafted free agent.

“It was a great weekend for the Hilltoppers,” head coach Mike Sanford said. “(The draftees) were drafted into really good situations. They’re going to really good fits for what their characteristics are. With this particular year with two draft picks and Deon Yelder as a high priority free agent, they all really personify what a professional is, as a human being, in the way they make decisions, in their lives off the field, in the way they attend class and graduate, and have high aspirations academically. These guys are what you want and what we’re looking for in our program going forward.”

With seven draft selections since 2016, WKU is now tied for the most draft picks from a Group of Five program nationally and the most in Conference USA.

Iyiebuniwe moved from an outside linebacker position to an inside linebacker position in defensive coordinator Clayton White’s 4-2-5 scheme, a move that paid large dividends for the Bowling Green native as he takes his next step to the NFL. He became the sixth-highest draft selection from WKU in the common draft era (since 1967).

White became the highest quarterback ever drafted from WKU and the first former Hilltopper to be drafted by the Dallas Cowboys when they took him in the fifth round. Sanford praised fellow Boise State alumnus Kellen Moore, a former backup quarterback turned coach of the Cowboys, for his efforts in bringing White to Dallas.

“(Kellen and I) were neighbors in Boise when I was the offensive coordinator (at Boise State) and he was still with the Cowboys as a player,” Sanford added. “I was blown away by his intellect and what he can do for Mike White. He spent two or three days with (offensive coordinator Junior Adams) and myself just to get a feel for who Mike White is and where he’s going.

“Mike could not have ended up in a better situation. The offensive structure we run here, that Mike ran in 2017, has a lot of similarities to what the Dallas Cowboys run. The beautiful thing about it is that Kellen can speak our language perfectly so Mike and Kellen will be on the same page from day one.” In Yelder, who had no receiving statistics prior to his breakout senior season in which he set a WKU single-season record for receiving yards by a tight end, the New Orleans Saints are getting a player that Sanford felt would fit in perfectly with their schemes and around his new teammates.

“I think Deon has a legitimate opportunity to compete to truly play as a rookie, both in special teams and as a tight end. I think there is a wide open opportunity to compete for him. We’re thrilled for him.” Multiple former Hilltoppers will also have the opportunity over the coming weeks to join NFL organizations via rookie mini-camp tryouts. Former WKU quarterback Tyler Ferguson attended last year’s Tennessee Titans camp and earned a practice squad roster spot.

Edwards Transferring

Sanford also announced on Tuesday that rising graduate senior Dennis Edwards, a three-year starter on the offensive line, has expressed his intent to transfer from the program as a graduate student.

“Dennis Edwards will be completing his academic career at Western Kentucky University this May. He’s informed us that he has opted to forgo his final year at Western Kentucky as a member of our roster. Certainly, the fact the he’s graduated from this university has given him the opportunity to decide what is best for him individually. He’s decided to go in another direction. Insofar as everything is done above board, we certainly will support him wherever he chooses to attend.”

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / May 10, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

WKU Future Schedules: [goto.ps/FutureFBSchedules]goto.ps/FutureFBSchedules

HILLTOPPERS ADD MICHIGAN STATE AND ALABAMA TO FUTURE FOOTBALL SCHEDULES

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU Football has continued its trend of scheduling attractive non-conference games by adding Big Ten foe Michigan State and Southeastern Conference opponent Alabama to future schedules, the program announced on Thursday.

WKU will travel to East Lansing for the first time in program history on Oct. 2, 2021 to take on the Spartans and returns to Tuscaloosa for what will be the third meeting since 2012 when the Hilltoppers and Crimson Tide face off on Sept. 16, 2023. WKU also traveled to Tuscaloosa in 2008 and 2016.

“We always want to measure ourselves against the best, and certainly road games in Big Ten and SEC environments are formidable challenges,” Director of Athletics Todd Stewart said. “Both of these games are exciting matchups against excellent programs but also provide excellent opportunities for our program, players and coaches. Additionally, each are close enough for our fans to be able to travel and attend the games in person and support our football team on the road which is a key component of our scheduling philosophy.”

With the addition of Michigan State, the Hilltoppers will face at least two programs from Power 5 leagues in at least eight consecutive years dating back to 2015. Since moving to the FBS level in 2009 and including games scheduled through 2021, the Hilltoppers have faced or will face a pair of Power 5 programs in 11 seasons.

In the year WKU plays at Michigan State, the Hilltoppers will also host their second-ever Power 5 program when Indiana comes to Houchens-Smith Stadium. WKU hosted Vanderbilt during the 2016 season.

WKU begins year two under head coach Mike Sanford on Aug. 31, on the road under the Friday night lights of Camp Randall Stadium, when the Hilltoppers take on Big Ten opponent Wisconsin.

2021 Non-Conference Schedule

- Sept. 11 – at Army
- **Sept. 25 – Indiana**
- Oct. 2 – at Michigan State

2023 Non-Conference Schedule

- **Sept. 2 – South Florida**
- Sept. 9 – at Alabama

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 7, 2018

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

HOME KICK TIMES AND TV DESIGNATIONS SET FOR 2018 FOOTBALL SEASON

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Tailgaters rejoice, as every game on the 2018 WKU Football home schedule will now kick off at 6:30 p.m. CT, under the lights at Houchens-Smith Stadium. Meanwhile, 11 of the Hilltoppers' 12 regular-season games have been confirmed on the national broadcast schedule, the Conference USA office announced on Thursday.

WKU will have four games air on the ESPN family of networks as part of a new agreement also announced on Thursday by the league. The 2018 season opener at Wisconsin, as previously reported, will air on ESPN. Three other games — the home opener against Maine (Sept. 8), at Charlotte (Oct. 13) and vs. Old Dominion (Oct. 20) — will air on the newly-launched ESPN+ platform.

The Hilltoppers open Conference USA season at home vs. Marshall on Sept. 29 and will be broadcasted on Stadium, while the Nov. 10 contest at Florida Atlantic will be streamed on Facebook through Stadium.

beIn Sports will carry WKU's final two home games: against FIU on Oct. 27 for Homecoming on The Hill, then UTEP on Nov. 17 for Senior Night. In addition, road contests against Middle Tennessee on Nov. 2 and Louisiana Tech on Nov. 24 can be seen on CBS Sports Network.

In postseason play, the 2018 Conference USA Championship game on Dec. 1 will also be shown on CBS Sports Network, while ESPN is scheduled to carry all six of the league's bowl games in which it has a guaranteed selection.

More About ESPN+:

ESPN+ offers fans thousands of additional live events, on-demand content and original programming not available on ESPN's linear TV or digital networks. This includes hundreds of MLB, NHL and MLS games, Grand Slam tennis, Top Rank boxing, PGA Tour golf, college sports, international rugby, cricket, the full library of ESPN Films (including 30 for 30) and more. Fans can subscribe to ESPN+ for just \$4.99 a month (or \$49.99 per year).

ESPN+ is an integrated part of the completely redesigned ESPN App, which is the premier all-in-one digital sports platform for fans and is a showcase of the company's culture of innovation. With a richer, increasingly more personalized experience, the new ESPN App curates all of ESPN's incredible content into an experience unique to each fan's individual tastes. ESPN+ is also available through ESPN.com.

More about Conference USA's agreement:

The multi-year contract between Conference USA and ESPN triples ESPN's inventory of league events from the previous deal to include more than 175 events on ESPN+ and ESPN3 for the upcoming 2018-19 season. More than 100 of those games will air on the newly launched ESPN+, which is the network's first multi-sport, direct-to-consumer subscription streaming service.

As part of the new deal, ESPN will air all remaining football games (approximately 45 in 2018) along with 60 regular-season men's basketball games and 28 regular-season women's basketball games. ESPN also picks up first-round men's and women's basketball action at the upcoming 2018 C-USA Basketball Championships in Frisco, Texas. ESPN's digital platforms will also spotlight additional C-USA championships throughout the year with special highlight shows. The sports expected to be featured include cross country, indoor and outdoor track & field, golf and tennis.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 11, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

WKU Future Schedules: [goto.ps/FutureFBSchedules]goto.ps/FutureFBSchedules

HILLTOPPERS ADD THREE NON-CONFERENCE GAMES TO FUTURE HOME SCHEDULES

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU Football has added four future non-conference games to the schedule, including three games to be played at Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium, the program announced on Monday.

The Hilltoppers will play a home-and-home series with Liberty beginning on Sept. 19, 2020 which completes WKU's six-game home slate and overall schedule for that season. WKU will travel to Lynchburg, Va., home of the Flames, who begin their inaugural FBS season in 2018, for a game on Sept. 6, 2025. The 2020 matchup will be the first-ever meeting between the schools.

WKU will also host UT-Martin in a single game to open the 2021 season on Sept. 4 in addition to welcoming back Houston Baptist to Houchens-Smith Stadium on Sept. 9, 2023. The Hilltoppers and Skyhawks played each year from 1997-2000, including the final two as members of the Ohio Valley Conference, but have not played since. WKU is 4-0 all-time vs. UTM.

The Huskies from Houston Baptist made their inaugural trip to Bowling Green during the 2016 campaign, falling to WKU 50-3.

With the addition of these three home games, the Hilltoppers' non-conference schedules are complete through 2021 and include six home games in each of the next three seasons, including a visit from Indiana out of the Big Ten Conference in 2021.

Seasons Mentioned:

2020 Non-Conference Schedule

- **Sept. 5 – Chattanooga**
- Sept. 12 – at Indiana
- **Sept. 19 – Liberty**
- Sept. 26 – at Louisville

2021 Non-Conference Schedule

- **Sept. 4 – UT-Martin**
- Sept. 11 – at Army
- **Sept. 25 – Indiana**
- Oct. 2 – at Michigan State

2023 Non-Conference Schedule

- **Sept. 2 – South Florida**
- **Sept. 9 – Houston Baptist**
- Sept. 16 – at Alabama

2025 Non-Conference Schedule

- Sept. 6 – at Liberty

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 27, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Player capsules for the offense are in the attached PDF.

A selection of photos (1-2 per player) can be found [HERE](#).

WKU FOOTBALL'S ALL-CENTURY OFFENSE UNVEILED ON WEDNESDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – After months of voting, WKU Football began to announce its All-Century team on Wednesday in honor of the 100th season of Hilltopper Football this fall.

The team is led by co-head coaches Jimmy Feix, the program's all-time winningest coach, and Jack Harbaugh, leader of the 2002 National Championship team and 2002 AFCA National Coach of the Year.

On Wednesday, the program announced the 12-member offensive side of the team, including the offensive captain, former All-American and the highest NFL Draft selection in school history, Forrest Lamp. The three captains were selected by virtue of their appearance on the highest percentage of ballots received. Thursday's announcements will include the 12-member defensive side of the ball, while the special teamers and one all-purpose player will be announced on Friday.

Over the spring and early summer, WKU invited fans to vote online and put together their own teams to count for a percentage of the overall voting totals. Simultaneously, other voting groups worked to create their own teams including members of athletic administration, W-Club Hall of Famers, and active W-Club football lettermen.

The offense, to account for variances in offensive schemes used in the program from the wing t to the triple option to a wide-open spread attack, included one quarterback, five offensive linemen, two running backs, one tight end, and three wide receivers. Six members of the team played in the current FBS era of the program, two were members of WKU's 2002 National Championship team, and four were members of the program during the Ohio Valley Conference era.

WKU will welcome back and recognize the entire team, where possible, for the home opener for the 2018 season against Maine on Sept. 8, and a number of activities for the team and fans will be announced this fall.

All-Century Team – Offense

Quarterback – Brandon Doughty (2013-15)

Running Back – Bobby Rainey (2008-11)

Running Back - Dickie Moore (1965-68)

Tight End – Jack Doyle (2009-12)

Wide Receiver – Taywan Taylor (2013-16)

Wide Receiver – Porter Williams (1970-73)

Wide Receiver – Nicholas Norris (2013-16)

Offensive Line – Forrest Lamp (2013-16)*

Offensive Line – Buster Ashley (2001-04)

Offensive Line – Chris Price (1999-02)

Offensive Line – David Carter (1973-76)

Offensive Line – Jim “Yogi” Hardin (1955-58)

ALL-CENTURY TEAM

PLAYER CAPSULES



OFFENSE

Quarterback

Brandon Doughty (2013-15)

Running Backs

Bobby Rainey (2008-11)

Dickie Moore (1965-68)

Tight End

Jack Doyle (2009-12)

Wide Receivers

Taywan Taylor (2013-16)

Porter Williams (1970-73)

Nicholas Norris (2013-16)

Offensive Line

Forrest Lamp (2013-16)*

Buster Ashley (2001-04)

Chris Price (1999-02)

David Carter (1973-76)

Jim "Yogi" Hardin (1955-58)

QUARTERBACK

Doughty, Brandon / 2013-15 — All-America 2015 ... Sammy Baugh Award winner 2014 ... WKU's 1st Heisman Trophy candidate (7 points) 2015 ... United Golden Arm Award finalist 2015 ... Maxwell Award 2015 ... Davey O'Brien Award semi-finalist 2015 ... C-USA Most Valuable Player 2014-15 ... Senior Class Award finalist 2015 ... All C-USA 2015 ... NFL Draft 2016 (7th round) ... NCAA 21st in completion percentage and 22nd in completions per game 2013 ... NCAA 1st in passing yards, 1st in passing TDs, 1st in points responsible for per game, 2nd in points responsible for, 2nd for passing yards per game, 3rd in total offense, 3rd in pass efficiency, 3rd in completions per game, 6th in completions percentage and 10th in yards per pass attempt 2014 ... NCAA 1st in completion percentage, 1st in passing TDs, 1st in passing yards, 1st in points responsible for, 2nd in pass efficiency, 2nd in points responsible for per game, 3rd in passing yards per game, 3rd in passing completions per game, 4th in yards per pass attempt and 6th in total offense 2015 ... virtually re-built the school record books for passing and total offense ... credited with 22 of the 43 300-yard passing games in WKU history.

RUNNING BACKS

Moore, Dickie / 1965-68 — All-America 1967 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Offensive Player of the Year 1967 ... WKU's 1st 1,000-yard rusher in 1965 ... led the nation in rushing in 1967 ... All-OVC 1965, 1967 ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... CFL Active 69 ... NCAA 13th in rushing 1965 ... NCAA 1st in rushing and 2nd in scoring 1967 ... his WKU career rushing yardage record stood for 20 years; and, his season record for rushing TDs stood for 49 years.

Rainey, Bobby* / 2008-11 — All-America 2010-11; SBC Offensive Player of the Year 2010-11 ... All-SBC 2010-11 ... NCAA 3rd in rushing 2010 ... NCAA 2nd in rushing and 24th in scoring 2011 ... NFL Active 12-to date ... set 11 rushing records plus career and season standards for all-purpose running.

WIDE RECEIVERS

Norris, Nicholas / 2013-16 — All-America 2016 ... NCAA 9th in receiving TDs, 13th in receiving yards and 22nd in receiving yards per game 2016 ... Norris and teammate Taywan Taylor finished their 4 years together as the most productive 1-2 tandem receivers in school history, accounting for a combined 447 catches for 7,325 yards and 67 TDs...Finished career as No. 2 in career receptions, yards, and touchdown catches behind teammate Taylor

Taylor, Taywan / 2013-16 — All-America 2015-16 ... Biletnikoff Award semi-finalist 2015-16 ... Senior Bowl 2017... All C-USA 2015-16 ... NFL Draft 2017 (3rd round) ... NFL Active 2017-to date ... NCAA 2nd in receiving TDs, 3rd in receiving yards and 10th in receiving yards per game 2015 ... NCAA 3rd in receiving TDs and receiving yards, 5th in receiving yards per game, 14th in receptions per game and 20th in total TDs 2016 ... Taylor and teammate Nicholas Norris finished their 4 years together as the most productive 1-2 tandem receivers in school history ... holds school records for career & season catches, yards and TDs.

Williams, Porter / 1970-73 — All-America 1973 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 1973 ... set school records for catches, receiving yards and TDs receiving in a season that stood for more than 4 decades ... also set a school standard career TD catches ... his 4 receptions for TDs at Murray St (including a school record 96-yarder for a score) in 1973 remain a WKU best.

TIGHT END

Doyle, Jack / 2009-12 — All-SBC 2012 ... Senior Bowl 2013 ... holds school record for receptions and receiving yards by a tight end, receptions by a freshman...Finished career No. 2 on career receptions list for all positions ... NFL active 2013-to date.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Ashley, Buster / 2001-04 — **Consensus All-America 2004** ... All-America 2002-04 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-GFC 2002-04.

Carter, David / 1973-76 — All-America 1976 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1974 ... NFL Draft 1977 (6th round) ... NFL active 1977-85.

Hardin, Jim "Yogi" / 1955-58 — All-America 1956-58 ... 1st WKU football athlete to earn All-America honors on multiple occasions (3 times - 1956, '57, '58) ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 1957-58.

Lamp, Forrest / 2013-16 — All-America 2015-16 ... Senior Bowl 2017 ... All C-USA 2015-16 ... anchored an offensive line ranked among the best in the nation in 2016 ... scored TD on a lateral pass in C-USA championship game in 2016 ... NFL Draft 2017 (2nd round -- earliest selection ever for a Topper football athlete).

Price, Chris / 1999-02 — **Consensus All-America 2002** ... All-America 2001-02 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 2000 ... All-GFC 01-02.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 28, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

Player capsules for the defense are in the attached PDF.

A selection of photos (1-2 per player) can be found [HERE](#).

WKU FOOTBALL'S ALL-CENTURY DEFENSE UNVEILED ON THURSDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – WKU Football continued the announcement of its All-Century team on Thursday, adding 12 names to the defensive side of the ball with five more to go on Friday.

The program is celebrating the 100th season of Hilltopper Football this fall, and the All-Century team is led by co-head coaches Jimmy Feix, the program's all-time winningest coach, and Jack Harbaugh, leader of the 2002 National Championship team and 2002 AFCA National Coach of the Year.

All-American defensive back and one of four retired jerseys, Virgil Livers was named the defensive side's captain, joining offensive lineman Forrest Lamp on the offensive side of the ball in captaincy. The three captains – including Friday's special team captain - were selected by virtue of their appearance on the highest percentage of ballots received.

Over the spring and early summer, WKU invited fans to vote online and put together their own teams to count for a percentage of the overall voting totals. Simultaneously, other voting groups worked to create their own teams including members of athletic administration, W-Club Hall of Famers, and active W-Club football lettermen.

The defense, to account for variances in defensive schemes used in the program including 4-3, 3-4, and 4-2-5, included four position players from each level of defense: line, linebacker, and backs.

WKU will welcome back and recognize the entire team, where possible, for the home opener for the 2018 season against Maine on Sept. 8, and a number of activities for the team and fans will be announced this fall.

All-Century Team – Defense

Defensive Line – Lawrence Brame (1967-70)

Defensive Line – John Bushong (1971-74)

Defensive Line – Tim Ford (1979-81)

Defensive Line – Quanterus Smith (2009-12)

Linebacker – Sherrod Coates (1999-02)

Linebacker – Paul Gray (1980-83)

Linebacker – Rick Green (1972-75)

Linebacker – Dale Lindsey (1963-64)

Defensive Back – Virgil Livers (1971-74)*

Defensive Back – Jim Burt (1961-64)

Defensive Back – Joseph Jefferson (1988-01)

Defensive Back – Mel Mitchell (1999-01)

ALL-CENTURY TEAM

PLAYER CAPSULES



DEFENSE

Defensive Line

Lawrence Brame (1967-70)
John Bushong (1971-74)
Tim Ford (1979-81)
Quanterus Smith (2009-12)

Linebackers

Sherrod Coates (1999-02)
Paul Gray (1980-83)
Rick Green (1972-75)
Dale Lindsey (1963-64)

Defensive Backs

Jim Burt (1961-64)
Joseph Jefferson (1998-01)
Virgil Livers (1971-74)*
Mel Mitchell (1999-01)

DEFENSIVE LINE

Brame, Lawrence / 1967-70 — All-America 1968, '70 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Defensive Player of the Year 1969-70 ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1968-70 ... set school record for career solo tackles ... NFL Draft 1971 (16th round) ... CFL active 1971-74, '77-78.

Bushong, John / 1971-74 — All-America 1974 ... All-OVC 1973-74 ... NFL Draft 1975 (8th round). NFL active 1975-76, '79-80.

Ford, Tim / 1979-81 — All-America 1980 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 1979 ... ranks among career leaders in assisted tackles.

Smith, Quanterus / 2009-12 — All-America 2012 ... SBC Defensive Player of the Year 2012 ... All-SBC 2012 ... owns the top 2 tackles-for-loss and sacks single game numbers in the WKU record books; also ranks 2nd in both season and career sacks ... NCAA 5th in tackles for loss and 8th in sacks 2012.

LINEBACKERS

Coates, Sherrod / 1999-02 — All-America 2001-03 ... All-GFC 2001-02 ... NFL active 2003-04 ... CFL active 2006 ... holds school season and career records for season and career tackles for loss, season and career sacks, and career forced fumbles ... NCAA 17th in tackles for loss 2001 ... NCAA 12th in tackles for loss and 16th in sacks, 2002.

Gray, Paul / 1980-83 — All-America 1982-83 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 1981 ... NFL Draft 1984 (10th round) ... NFL active 1987; CFL active 1984-86 ... set school record for both season (he ranks 1-3 on that list) and career assisted tackles -- both still WKU standards ... also set a record for career fumbles recoveries (still #2 on that list); and, still ranks #2 on the records lists for season and career total tackles.

Green, Rick / 1972-75 — All-America 1974-75 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... All-OVC 1974-75 ... set school records for total tackles (career and season) and solo stops (career and season) that still stand 42 years later ... and, set the mark for career assisted tackles that stood for 8 years.

Lindsey, Dale / 1963-64 — **WKU Retired Jersey** ...All-America 1964 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1963-64 ... NFL Draft 1965 (7th round) ... NFL active 1965-73.

DEFENSIVE BACK

Burt, Jim / 1961-64 — All-America 1963-64 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1963-64 ... NFL Draft 1965 (10th round) ... AFL Draft 1965 (15th round). Note: Burt's 1st team selection on the ABC Sports Radio Tom Harmon All-America Defensive Team in 1964, featuring him (from a college division school) along with 10 others who all played for "major" schools, including Dick Butkus of Illinois.

Jefferson, Joseph / 1998-01 — All-America 2000-01 ... All-GFC 2001 ... Senior Bowl 2002 ... ranks among the leaders in season and career interceptions, season interception return yards and average per return; is also on the list of the best Toppers in both season and career passes defended ... NFL Draft 2002 (3rd round) ... NFL active 2002-05 ... NCAA 21st in interceptions 2000.

Livers, Virgil * / 1971-74 — **WKU Retired Jersey** ... All-America 1974 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Defensive Player of the Year 1974 ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1974 ... holds school records that still stand for average interception return in both a season and a career ... also tied Mike McCoy for career interception return yards (that stood for 27 years) ... NFL Draft 1975 (4th round) ... NFL active 1975-79.

Mitchell, Mel / 1999-01 — **Consensus All-America 2001** ... All-America 2000-01 ... All-GFC 01 ... Buck Buchanan Award finalist 2001 ... still holds the school record for career blocked kicks ... NFL Draft 2002 (5th round) ... NFL active 2002-07.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 29, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

*Player capsules for the **entire** All-Century team are in the attached PDF.*

A selection of photos (1-2 per player) can be found [HERE](#).

WKU FOOTBALL'S ALL-CENTURY SPECIAL TEAMERS AND ALL-PURPOSE PLAYER COMPLETE UNVEIL ON FRIDAY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – After announcing offensive and defensive representatives on Wednesday and Thursday, WKU Football completed the unveiling of the program's All-Century team on Friday with the announcement of special teamers and one all-purpose player.

The program is celebrating the 100th season of Hilltopper Football this fall, and the All-Century team is led by co-head coaches Jimmy Feix, the program's all-time winningest coach, and Jack Harbaugh, leader of the 2002 National Championship team and 2002 AFCA National Coach of the Year.

Joining All-Americans Forrest Lamp (OL, offense) and Virgil Livers (DB, defense), all-everything quarterback Willie Taggart earned the third and final captain's spot as the program's all-purpose player. In his final two seasons on The Hill (1997-98), Taggart led the Hilltoppers in both rushing and passing. At the time, his 1,313 rushing yards were the second-most ever by a I-AA quarterback in a single season and his 3,997 rushing yards were the most ever in a career.

Over the spring and early summer, WKU invited fans to vote online and put together their own teams to count for a percentage of the overall voting totals. Simultaneously, other voting groups worked to create their own teams including members of athletic administration, W-Club Hall of Famers, and active W-Club football lettermen.

WKU will welcome back and recognize the entire team, where possible, for the home opener for the 2018 season against Maine on Sept. 8, and a number of activities for the team and fans will be announced this fall.

All-Century Team – Special Teams/All-Purpose Player

All-Purpose Player – Willie Taggart (1995-98)

Returner – Antonio Andrews (2010-13)

Returner – Joey Stockton (1994-97)

Kicker – Garrett Schwettman (2012-15)

Punter – Brian Claybourn (2001-04)

ALL-CENTURY TEAM

PLAYER CAPSULES



OFFENSE

Quarterback

Brandon Doughty (2013-15)

Running Backs

Bobby Rainey (2008-11)

Dickie Moore (1965-68)

Tight End

Jack Doyle (2009-12)

Wide Receivers

Taywan Taylor (2013-16)

Porter Williams (1970-73)

Nicholas Norris (2013-16)

Offensive Line

Forrest Lamp (2013-16)*

Buster Ashley (2001-04)

Chris Price (1999-02)

David Carter (1973-76)

Jim "Yogi" Hardin (1955-58)

QUARTERBACK

Doughty, Brandon / 2013-15 — All-America 2015 ... Sammy Baugh Award winner 2014 ... WKU's 1st Heisman Trophy candidate (7 points) 2015 ... United Golden Arm Award finalist 2015 ... Maxwell Award 2015 ... Davey O'Brien Award semi-finalist 2015 ... C-USA Most Valuable Player 2014-15 ... Senior Class Award finalist 2015 ... All C-USA 2015 ... NFL Draft 2016 (7th round) ... NCAA 21st in completion percentage and 22nd in completions per game 2013 ... NCAA 1st in passing yards, 1st in passing TDs, 1st in points responsible for per game, 2nd in points responsible for, 2nd for passing yards per game, 3rd in total offense, 3rd in pass efficiency, 3rd in completions per game, 6th in completions percentage and 10th in yards per pass attempt 2014 ... NCAA 1st in completion percentage, 1st in passing TDs, 1st in passing yards, 1st in points responsible for, 2nd in pass efficiency, 2nd in points responsible for per game, 3rd in passing yards per game, 3rd in passing completions per game, 4th in yards per pass attempt and 6th in total offense 2015 ... virtually re-built the school record books for passing and total offense ... credited with 22 of the 43 300-yard passing games in WKU history.

RUNNING BACKS

Moore, Dickie / 1965-68 — All-America 1967 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Offensive Player of the Year 1967 ... WKU's 1st 1,000-yard rusher in 1965 ... led the nation in rushing in 1967 ... All-OVC 1965, 1967 ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... CFL Active 69 ... NCAA 13th in rushing 1965 ... NCAA 1st in rushing and 2nd in scoring 1967 ... his WKU career rushing yardage record stood for 20 years; and, his season record for rushing TDs stood for 49 years.

Rainey, Bobby* / 2008-11 — All-America 2010-11; SBC Offensive Player of the Year 2010-11 ... All-SBC 2010-11 ... NCAA 3rd in rushing 2010 ... NCAA 2nd in rushing and 24th in scoring 2011 ... NFL Active 12-to date ... set 11 rushing records plus career and season standards for all-purpose running.

WIDE RECEIVERS

Norris, Nicholas / 2013-16 — All-America 2016 ... NCAA 9th in receiving TDs, 13th in receiving yards and 22nd in receiving yards per game 2016 ... Norris and teammate Taywan Taylor finished their 4 years together as the most productive 1-2 tandem receivers in school history, accounting for a combined 447 catches for 7,325 yards and 67 TDs...Finished career as No. 2 in career receptions, yards, and touchdown catches behind teammate Taylor

Taylor, Taywan / 2013-16 — All-America 2015-16 ... Biletnikoff Award semi-finalist 2015-16 ... Senior Bowl 2017... All C-USA 2015-16 ... NFL Draft 2017 (3rd round) ... NFL Active 2017-to date ... NCAA 2nd in receiving TDs, 3rd in receiving yards and 10th in receiving yards per game 2015 ... NCAA 3rd in receiving TDs and receiving yards, 5th in receiving yards per game, 14th in receptions per game and 20th in total TDs 2016 ... Taylor and teammate Nicholas Norris finished their 4 years together as the most productive 1-2 tandem receivers in school history ... holds school records for career & season catches, yards and TDs.

Williams, Porter / 1970-73 — All-America 1973 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 1973 ... set school records for catches, receiving yards and TDs receiving in a season that stood for more than 4 decades ... also set a school standard career TD catches ... his 4 receptions for TDs at Murray St (including a school record 96-yarder for a score) in 1973 remain a WKU best.

TIGHT END

Doyle, Jack / 2009-12 — All-SBC 2012 ... Senior Bowl 2013 ... holds school record for receptions and receiving yards by a tight end, receptions by a freshman...Finished career No. 2 on career receptions list for all positions ... NFL active 2013-to date.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Ashley, Buster / 2001-04 — **Consensus All-America 2004** ... All-America 2002-04 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-GFC 2002-04.

Carter, David / 1973-76 — All-America 1976 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1974 ... NFL Draft 1977 (6th round) ... NFL active 1977-85.

Hardin, Jim "Yogi" / 1955-58 — All-America 1956-58 ... 1st WKU football athlete to earn All-America honors on multiple occasions (3 times - 1956, '57, '58) ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 1957-58.

Lamp, Forrest / 2013-16 — All-America 2015-16 ... Senior Bowl 2017 ... All C-USA 2015-16 ... anchored an offensive line ranked among the best in the nation in 2016 ... scored TD on a lateral pass in C-USA championship game in 2016 ... NFL Draft 2017 (2nd round -- earliest selection ever for a Topper football athlete).

Price, Chris / 1999-02 — **Consensus All-America 2002** ... All-America 2001-02 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 2000 ... All-GFC 01-02.

ALL-CENTURY TEAM

PLAYER CAPSULES



DEFENSE

Defensive Line

Lawrence Brame (1967-70)
John Bushong (1971-74)
Tim Ford (1979-81)
Quanterus Smith (2009-12)

Linebackers

Sherrod Coates (1999-02)
Paul Gray (1980-83)
Rick Green (1972-75)
Dale Lindsey (1963-64)

Defensive Backs

Jim Burt (1961-64)
Joseph Jefferson (1998-01)
Virgil Livers (1971-74)*
Mel Mitchell (1999-01)

DEFENSIVE LINE

Brame, Lawrence / 1967-70 — All-America 1968, '70 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Defensive Player of the Year 1969-70 ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1968-70 ... set school record for career solo tackles ... NFL Draft 1971 (16th round) ... CFL active 1971-74, '77-78.

Bushong, John / 1971-74 — All-America 1974 ... All-OVC 1973-74 ... NFL Draft 1975 (8th round). NFL active 1975-76, '79-80.

Ford, Tim / 1979-81 — All-America 1980 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 1979 ... ranks among career leaders in assisted tackles.

Smith, Quanterus / 2009-12 — All-America 2012 ... SBC Defensive Player of the Year 2012 ... All-SBC 2012 ... owns the top 2 tackles-for-loss and sacks single game numbers in the WKU record books; also ranks 2nd in both season and career sacks ... NCAA 5th in tackles for loss and 8th in sacks 2012.

LINEBACKERS

Coates, Sherrod / 1999-02 — All-America 2001-03 ... All-GFC 2001-02 ... NFL active 2003-04 ... CFL active 2006 ... holds school season and career records for season and career tackles for loss, season and career sacks, and career forced fumbles ... NCAA 17th in tackles for loss 2001 ... NCAA 12th in tackles for loss and 16th in sacks, 2002.

Gray, Paul / 1980-83 — All-America 1982-83 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... All-OVC 1981 ... NFL Draft 1984 (10th round) ... NFL active 1987; CFL active 1984-86 ... set school record for both season (he ranks 1-3 on that list) and career assisted tackles -- both still WKU standards ... also set a record for career fumbles recoveries (still #2 on that list); and, still ranks #2 on the records lists for season and career total tackles.

Green, Rick / 1972-75 — All-America 1974-75 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... All-OVC 1974-75 ... set school records for total tackles (career and season) and solo stops (career and season) that still stand 42 years later ... and, set the mark for career assisted tackles that stood for 8 years.

Lindsey, Dale / 1963-64 — **WKU Retired Jersey** ...All-America 1964 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1963-64 ... NFL Draft 1965 (7th round) ... NFL active 1965-73.

DEFENSIVE BACK

Burt, Jim / 1961-64 — All-America 1963-64 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1963-64 ... NFL Draft 1965 (10th round) ... AFL Draft 1965 (15th round). Note: Burt's 1st team selection on the ABC Sports Radio Tom Harmon All-America Defensive Team in 1964, featuring him (from a college division school) along with 10 others who all played for "major" schools, including Dick Butkus of Illinois.

Jefferson, Joseph / 1998-01 — All-America 2000-01 ... All-GFC 2001 ... Senior Bowl 2002 ... ranks among the leaders in season and career interceptions, season interception return yards and average per return; is also on the list of the best Toppers in both season and career passes defended ... NFL Draft 2002 (3rd round) ... NFL active 2002-05 ... NCAA 21st in interceptions 2000.

Livers, Virgil * / 1971-74 — **WKU Retired Jersey** ... All-America 1974 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... OVC Defensive Player of the Year 1974 ... OVC Half Century Team 1998 ... OVC 40th Anniversary Team 1988 ... All-OVC 1974 ... holds school records that still stand for average interception return in both a season and a career ... also tied Mike McCoy for career interception return yards (that stood for 27 years) ... NFL Draft 1975 (4th round) ... NFL active 1975-79.

Mitchell, Mel / 1999-01 — **Consensus All-America 2001** ... All-America 2000-01 ... All-GFC 01 ... Buck Buchanan Award finalist 2001 ... still holds the school record for career blocked kicks ... NFL Draft 2002 (5th round) ... NFL active 2002-07.

ALL-CENTURY TEAM

PLAYER CAPSULES



SPECIAL TEAMS/ALL-PURPOSE

Kicker

Garrett Schwettman (2012-15)

Punter

Brian Claybourn (2001-04)

Returns

Antonio Andrews (2010-13)

Joey Stockton (1994-97)

All-Purpose Player

Willie Taggart (1995-98)

KICKER

Schwettman, Garrett / 2012-15 — Lou Groza Award semi-finalist 2015 ... All C-USA 2015 ... NCAA 20th in scoring 2014; NCAA 1st in FG percentage 2015 ... holds school record for career and season points scored; also holds records for career field goals made, consecutive FGs made, PAT-Ks made for a season and for a career; shares standard for PAT-Ks made in a game.

PUNTER

Claybourn, Brian / 2001-04 — All-America 2004 ... All-GFC 2003-04 ... CFL active 2006 ... NCAA 19th in punting average 2001; NCAA 19th in punting average 2003; NCAA 4th in punting in 2004 ... one of just 4 punters to kick for more than 9,000 yards ... broke long-standing school records for game, season and career punting average ...

RETURNER

Andrews, Antonio / 2010-13 — All-America 2012-13 ... Senior Bowl 2014 ... SBC Player of the Year 2013 ... SBC Offensive Player of the Year 2013 ... All-SBC 2012-13 ... Paul Hornung Award finalist 2012-13 ... Doak Walker Award semi-finalist 2013 ... NFL active 2014-16 ... NCAA 15th in punt returns and 18 in KO returns, 2012 ... ranks 3rd in school history in both KO returns and KO return yardage ... one of just 2 in school history to total 200-plus KO return yards in a game ...

Stockton, Joey / 1994-97 — All-America 1995-97 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... still holds school records for career and game KO returns and was 1st Topper to total 2,000-plus yards in KO returns ... remains the only Hilltopper to score two TDs on KO returns in a single game (1 for 100 yds and 1 for just 42 yards) and is one of only two to return one 100 yards for a score ... NCAA 22nd in KO returns average 1995; NCAA 6th in KO return average 1996.

ALL-PURPOSE

Taggart, Willie / 1995-98 — **WKU Retired Jersey** ... All-America 1997-98 ... WKU Athletic Hall of Fame ... Walter Payton Award finalist 1997-98 ... the only quarterback on the WKU career leaders list for all-purpose running (ranking #7).

2018 WKU FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time (CT)	TV	Location
Aug. 31 (Fri.)	at Wisconsin	8 p.m.	ESPN	Madison, Wis.
Sept. 8	MAINE	6:30 p.m.	ESPN+	Bowling Green, Ky.
Sept. 15	at Louisville	6:30 p.m.	ACC RSN	Louisville, Ky.
Sept. 22	at Ball State	TBA	TBA	Muncie, Ind.
Sept. 29	MARSHALL*	6:30 p.m.	Stadium	Bowling Green, Ky.
<i>Oct. 6</i>	<i>BYE</i>			
Oct. 13	at Charlotte*	2:30 p.m.	ESPN+	Charlotte, N.C.
Oct. 20	OLD DOMINION*	6:30 p.m.	ESPN+	Bowling Green, Ky.
Oct. 27	FIU* (Homecoming)	6:30 p.m.	beIN Sports	Bowling Green, Ky.
Nov. 2 (Fri.)	at Middle Tennessee*	7 p.m.	CBS SN	Murfreesboro, Tenn.
Nov. 10	at Florida Atlantic*	TBA	Stadium (Facebook)	Boca Raton, Fla.
Nov. 17	UTEP* (Senior Night)	6:30 p.m.	beIN Sports	Bowling Green, Ky.
Nov. 24	at Louisiana Tech*	11 a.m.	CBS SN	Ruston, La.

Home games in **BOLD** | * Indicates Conference USA game

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 13, 2018

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Head shot (WKU Athletics) and action photo (Chet White, UK Athletics) attached, please attribute credit if used

LINEBACKER ELI BROWN GRANTED IMMEDIATE ELIGIBILITY FOR 2018

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Incoming WKU Football linebacker Eli Brown will be eligible for competition in 2018 after the NCAA approved a waiver request for immediate eligibility. A Warren East High School graduate in 2015, Brown enters the campaign as a redshirt junior in athletic standing, and will have two years of eligibility remaining after transferring from the University of Kentucky.

Brown will have media availability on Monday, July 16 at 1:15 p.m. in the Paul Just Media Room in E.A. Diddle Arena.

"Not only is Eli one of the best high school linebackers of the last decade in our area, he is an incredible young man with a powerful story," head coach Mike Sanford said. "We're ecstatic that he will be able to play for us this season. I commend the NCAA for truly putting the student-athlete first in this decision."

Brown appeared in 22 games for the Wildcats over the past two seasons, registering 62 tackles (37 solo, 25 assisted) after redshirting in 2015. As a sophomore in 2017, he recorded a career-high six tackles on Sept. 16 at South Carolina, then again on Sept. 30 vs. Eastern Michigan. He added one tackle for loss in each of those contests.

Brown played for former Raiders' head coach Steve Long and was a consensus four-star recruit coming out of Warren East. Scout ranked him the No. 1 outside linebacker in Kentucky and the second-best overall prospect in the state. ESPN listed Brown as the 15th-highest outside linebacker in the nation and No. 244 in its Top 300 and he was chosen for the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

He had 50 tackles, adding 10 tackles for loss, an interception, two pass breakups and one fumble recovery as a senior. In the previous year, Brown had 50 tackles, including two for loss, with two interceptions and a forced fumble.

He was named to the Courier Journal's 2014 All-State Football Team and earned 2014 Herald-Leader Class of the Commonwealth status, along with being a 2014 Associated Press All-State First Team selection. Brown helped the Raiders to the state playoffs all four years of high school, including the state semifinals his sophomore season.



WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 16, 2018

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Links: [Full Interview \(YouTube\)](#) | [Story \(WKUSports.com\)](#)

LINEBACKER ELI BROWN ADDRESSES MEDIA FOR FIRST TIME AS A HILLTOPPER

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — WKU Football linebacker Eli Brown addressed the media for the first time as a Hilltopper on Monday afternoon. The Warren East High School graduate discussed a variety of topics, beginning with the process of transferring from the University of Kentucky.

“The decision came from doing what’s best for me and my family,” he said. “Coming home, I’ll have the support of my step-mother and my father and basically to me it’s the best thing that could have happened.”

As a child, Brown lived in a handful of different places before ultimately moving from Florida to Bowling Green to live with his father. He started playing football at Henry F. Moss Middle School and then went on to begin as a freshman at Warren Central High School. But after one year with the Dragons he decided to transfer to Warren East, where he would play for head coach Steve Long and the Raiders.

“The coaches and teachers here, they all showed that they cared. They pushed me and made me believe that I could be something,” he said. “Bowling Green has been the best thing that happened to me.”

The top linebacker in the state of Kentucky and No. 244 on ESPN’s Top 300, Brown chose to attend Kentucky after graduating in the Class of 2015. Brown appeared in 22 games for the Wildcats over the past two seasons, registering 62 tackles (37 solo, 25 assisted) after redshirting the 2015 season.

Although he enjoyed success for the Wildcats, family responsibility came first after Brown’s mother passed away and his two younger sisters moved to Lexington a few years ago. In Bowling Green, he will be able to get the necessary help from family and loved ones in the area.

On the field, Brown will have an opportunity like those of former Hilltopper Joel Iyiebuniwe (South Warren High School) and current WKU linebacker Ben Holt (Bowling Green High School) of playing Division I football in the same town where they competed during their prep careers.

“I’ll be playing in front of people who I grew up with,” he said. “What’s better than coming home and being surrounded by people who care about me and want to push me to go great?”

Brown has fit in seamlessly with the Hilltopper coaching staff and linebacking group, who have helped him get acclimated to the WKU defensive schemes.

“The playbook’s a little different here, I’ve learned at least the base defense at this point,” he said. “If you ask me about certain plays I know what to do, but now you have to translate it to the field and learn it at a fast pace and get to the ball ... I feel like I’ll be ready for the first game.”

On an interpersonal level, it has been a perfect fit as well.

“I love those guys, Coach [Mike] Sanford especially has always been pulling for me. This whole coaching staff - Coach [Clayton] White, Coach [Maurice] Crum, everybody - there’s not any phony-ness around, everybody’s straightforward,” he said. “As a team, we’re all pushing each other and we’re focused on trying to win this first game at Wisconsin.”

Brown continued, “And the linebacker group we have here, I love every one of them. You have [upperclassmen] Ben Holt and Masai Whyte who gravitated to me and the freshmen to teach us the defense. That made me love it here even more, like I’ll go to war with these guys.”

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 17, 2018

Football / Contact: Kyle Neaves, WKU Athletic Communications/Media Relations

WKU GREATER LOUISVILLE ALUMNI CHAPTER'S ANNUAL FOOTBALL KICKOFF PARTY SET FOR JULY 25

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – For the fifth-straight year, the WKU Greater Louisville Alumni Chapter will host their annual WKU Football Louisville Kickoff Party at Buffalo Wild Wings in the Shelbyville Road Plaza (4600 Shelbyville Road) on Wednesday, July 25.

The event is set for a 6 p.m. ET start and will feature head coach Mike Sanford and select players from the greater Louisville area. WKU's roster features 28 players from the Commonwealth, the most among the three Football Bowl Subdivision schools in the state, and nine from the Louisville region.

Additionally, fans can expect plenty of autographs, prizes and giveaways and food specials. Sanford and select Hilltoppers of local interest will also speak at the event.

WKU begins its 2018 campaign, the 100th season in school history, at Big Ten Conference foe Wisconsin in a Friday night showdown from Camp Randall Stadium. Kickoff is set for 8 p.m. CT on ESPN. The Hilltoppers will also return to Louisville as a team on Sept. 15 when they play at Louisville in the first of a three-game series renewal. The two in-state foes have not met on the gridiron since 1998.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 18, 2018

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Live Streams: [East Division](#) | [West Division](#)

HILLTOPPERS TRAVEL TRIO TO IRVING FOR CONFERENCE USA FOOTBALL KICKOFF

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — A WKU Football trio heads to Irving, Texas, on Wednesday to represent the Hilltoppers for the 2018 Conference USA Media Kickoff. Head coach Mike Sanford will be joined by junior wide receiver Lucky Jackson and senior defensive back DeAndre Farris.

The event from July 18-19 will take place at The Star, which is the Dallas Cowboys' World Headquarters and just down the road from C-USA's main offices. WKU and the rest of the East Division members will have media obligations on Thursday from 8-11:30 a.m., while the West Division has hours on Wednesday from 1-4:30 p.m.

Live streams on Watch ESPN can be accessed via the links above.

There will be other events for the Hilltoppers, including a tour of the NFL facility and an evening outing at Pinstack Plano, which features bowling and arcade games. An annual tradition for the Red and White travel party is a lunch trip to Hard Eight BBQ for some authentic Texas eats.

Sanford enters year two as WKU's head coach on the heels of back-to-back record-setting recruiting classes. His 2017 signing class set a new record for the highest-rated recruiting class in school history. So, naturally, the 2018 signing class improved on that mark.

After leading his team to a 2017 Cure Bowl appearance - the Hilltoppers' sixth consecutive and one of just five rookie head coaches last year to do it - Sanford's sophomore campaign returns a wealth of youth but thin on statistics.

Jackson racked up 39 receptions for 600 yards and three touchdowns as a sophomore following an impressive opening campaign. He ranked second on WKU with 15.4 yards per catch, while his 600 yards receiving put him at third-most. He led the Hilltoppers with three 100-yard games and 10 receptions of 20-plus yards, three of which going for touchdowns.

He started his campaign with a bang, catching five passes for a career-high 144 yards, including and a 66-yard touchdown in the second quarter of the season-opener vs. Eastern Kentucky. He also added 135 yards receiving on Nov. 4 at Vanderbilt and 109 through the air on Nov. 17 vs. Middle Tennessee. His 93-yard score in the fourth quarter against the Blue Raiders tied for the third-longest catch in WKU history and was 1-of-8 pass plays of 90-plus yards in FBS.

Farris tied for the lead among WKU cornerbacks with 11 starts and led the team with 14 pass breakups. He recorded 54 tackles (39 solo, 15 assisted) on the season, including a career-high seven on three occasions. He made his second-career interception on Oct. 28 vs. Florida Atlantic, while also picking up a tackle for a six-yard loss and five total tackles on the evening.

His 14 pass breakups tied for 13th in FBS and tied for most among Conference USA defenders. He recorded multiple pass breakups in four games, including a career-high four on Sept. 23 vs. Ball State. Those four pass breakups tied a Hilltopper single-game record in the program's FBS Era.

WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 20, 2018

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Links: [John Mackey Award](#) | [Deane Story \(WBKO\)](#)

Head shot attached, please credit WKU Athletics if used

MIK'QUAN DEANE LANDS ON JOHN MACKEY AWARD WATCH LIST

NEW YORK, N.Y. — WKU Football senior tight end Mik'Quan Deane has been named to the 2018 John Mackey Award Preseason Watch List, the committee announced Friday morning. Deane returns as the Hilltoppers' top receiving tight end, catching 11 passes for 143 yards and one touchdown last season.

Those numbers put Deane second among WKU tight ends in 2017 behind Deon Yelder, who was signed as an undrafted free agent by the New Orleans Saints. Deane caught at least one pass in five games, including a career-long 34-yard reception on Sept. 16 vs. Louisiana Tech. He scored his first career touchdown on a 20-yard strike in the second quarter on Oct. 14 vs. Charlotte.

In his first career start on Nov. 4 at Vanderbilt - in place of an injured Yelder - Deane racked up career-highs of five receptions and 57 yards against the SEC club.

The Hilltoppers have a storied tradition that includes the likes of Yelder, Jack Doyle (2009-12, currently plays for the Indianapolis Colts), Tyler Higbee (2013-15, currently plays for the Los Angeles Rams), Mitchell Henry (2011-14, played for the Green Bay Packers from 2015-16) and others.

Deane is 1-of-63 student-athletes to be listed, including only 1-of-4 from Conference USA.

Given annually to the most outstanding collegiate tight end, the award recipient has been selected by a vote of the John Mackey Award Selection Committee since 2000. The 2018 Mackey Award recipient will be announced on Dec. 5, and then presented live on Dec. 6 at The Home Depot College Football Awards Red Carpet Show on ESPNU.

NFL Hall of Fame member John Mackey is considered to be the best to have played the tight end position. A tight end by whom all others are measured, Mackey was a role model on and off the field as demonstrated by his Super Bowl Championship, his commitment to community and his place in history as the first President of the NFLPA.



WKU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA RELATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / July 26, 2018

FOOTBALL / Contact: Bryan Fyalkowski

Head shot attached, please credit WKU Athletics if used

JULIEN LEWIS EARNS SPOT ON WUERFFEL TROPHY WATCH LIST

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — WKU Football senior defensive lineman Julien Lewis has been named to the 2018 Wuerffel Trophy Watch List, it was announced Thursday morning. The Wuerffel Trophy is "College Football's Premier Award for Community Service" and is awarded to the FBS player who best combines exemplary community service with athletic and academic achievement.

Lewis - who was recognized as the Male Athlete Community Outreach Award recipient at the inaugural TOPSY Awards in April - is a leader on the field, in the classroom and serving the community. The Madison, Ala., native has contributed his time and support to a number of initiatives with the Hilltoppers, including Special Olympics group visits to Houchens-Smith Stadium and Read Across Bowling Green.

On the field, Lewis appeared in all 13 games for the Hilltoppers last season, starting the final seven on the defensive line. He recorded WKU's lone field goal block of the season when he tipped a 39-yard attempt by Charlotte on Oct. 14 to preserve a scoreless second quarter. He also had a career-high two quarterback hurries against the 49ers, finishing the year with five total. He had a career-high seven tackles on Oct. 20 at Old Dominion in his first-career start, including a tackle for loss.

He played in all 14 games as a sophomore, tallying 16 tackles (five solo) and 1.5 tackles for loss with a half-sack. He forced a pair of quarterback hurries, a fumble in the Boca Raton Bowl and blocked an extra point attempt at Marshall which was returned by WKU for two points. Lewis recorded three tackles against Houston Baptist and FAU and his half-sack came against FIU.

One representative from 106 different programs across the country were added to the initial Wuerffel Trophy Watch List. After a nomination process, semifinalists for the award will be announced on November 1 and finalists will be announced on November 19.

