2012

UA19 2011-12 WKU Athletics Annual Report

WKU Athletics

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$100 million in new athletic facilities or renovations

85 percent of student-athletes who have completed their eligibility graduated

82 Sun Belt Conference championships

Since the year 2000

WKU: A leader in Intercollegiate Athletics

Men’s basketball made its 22nd trip to the NCAA Tournament and posted the largest comeback in the final five minutes of a game in NCAA tournament history by rallying from 16 points down to defeat Mississippi Valley State in Dayton, Ohio.

Running back Bobby Rainey graduated with a degree in sports management and was named to five All-American teams after ranking second in the nation in rushing in 2011 (141.3 ypg).

Swimmer Claire Donahue earned a spot on the 2012 United States Olympic Team after graduating in 2011 and winning two gold medals in the 2011 Pan American Games.

Volleyball completed an outstanding campaign with Sun Belt Conference regular-season and tournament championships, a trip to the NCAA Tournament and a number-24 national ranking. Jordyn Skinner and Melanie Stutsman picked up All-American honors, and Skinner was named the conference’s player of the year.

Sun Belt Conference championships
Hello Hilltopper Nation,

It is truly an honor to serve as WKU’s 15th Director of Athletics! I am very appreciative and excited about the opportunity, and I thank you for your support of the Hilltoppers!

The recently concluded 2011-12 season featured many notable accomplishments for WKU both on the field of play and in the classroom. Our men’s track program became the first in Sun Belt Conference history to win the league’s cross country, indoor and outdoor track titles in the same season. Women’s cross country also captured a Sun Belt title, and our volleyball program won the Sun Belt’s regular season and tournament titles and advanced to the NCAA tournament for the second consecutive season. Men’s basketball became only the second team in Sun Belt Conference history to win four games in four days in claiming the league’s tournament title and then won an NCAA Tournament game in record-setting fashion a week later.

We are equally proud of our academic achievements. Following the recently-completed spring semester, the cumulative grade point average for all 385 student-athletes is 3.05, and 11 of our 15 sports programs have a cumulative team GPA of 3.0 or higher. We also had 120 athletes graduate in the last calendar year (46 in December commencement ceremonies and 74 in May), further illustrating that we have an outstanding blend of athletic and academic success at WKU!

Our success can be traced to many factors, but there is no question it begins at the top. The vision and leadership of our president, Dr. Gary Ransdell, has impacted and transformed our entire university, and we are very fortunate to have a Board of Regents that shares this commitment to excellence across our campus. Our coaches work tirelessly in recruiting and developing our student-athletes, and our athletes are motivated to succeed in all their endeavors. WKU’s faculty and staff understand how athletics can support and bring greater attention to the university’s overall mission. We receive vital support from our community, alumni, corporate sponsors and friends, and the loyalty and passion of the Hilltopper Nation is unique and inspiring.

Moving forward, our objectives can be classified within the following five areas:

- Our student-athletes are the reason we are here, and our primary focus will always be on helping them obtain their degree and on providing the important personal development that is necessary to prepare them for life after college.

- Win championships and make an impact on the national stage by succeeding in NCAA post-season play.

- Expand our fan base, pack our athletic venues and grow revenues so we can increase the investment in our student-athletes, programs and facilities.

- Continue to be a vital component of our university, community and the Commonwealth of Kentucky – consistently engage and interact with our constituents, schools, charities, and youth groups.

- Understand, monitor and be compliant with NCAA rules.

Our responsibility is to ensure that we not only build upon past accomplishments but aspire to reach even farther and higher than our predecessors. We will be proactive and aggressive in identifying challenges and overcoming them, and we will never settle as another accomplishment always lies ahead. We will not be influenced by what those outside our program say we can and cannot do. We are the ones in control of our destiny, and with our history, tradition, facilities, and fan support, the sky is the limit for WKU Athletics. We do not only have to dream big, we can achieve big, and we will!

On behalf of our student-athletes, coaches and staff, thank you for all that you do for WKU Athletics!

GO TOPS!

Todd Stewart
Director of Intercollegiate Athletics
What Have You Done to be a Champion Today?

Lady Topper goalkeeper Libby Stout completed her illustrious career with 39 shutouts, the second-most in NCAA Division I history, and claims numerous other WKU records.

Unprecedented trifecta
With a team title at the Sun Belt Conference Outdoor Track & Field Championships, WKU became the first school to win the men’s cross country, indoor and outdoor track championships in the same year in conference history.

82 Conference Championships and an 85% Graduation Rate since 1999-2000
A Perfect Blend of Academic and Athletic Success
The mission of the Western Kentucky University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is to support the university vision by providing a comprehensive, high quality education for student-athletes and to serve the university community, alumni, and friends through success and distinction within an environment of uncompromising integrity. The WKU Athletic Department seeks to be a source of pride for the citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and to be recognized as a nationally prominent program by consistently winning Sun Belt Conference championships and achieving frequent success in NCAA post-season competitions. It is also imperative that we compete with dignity, honor and respect in upholding and advancing WKU’s rich history and tradition.

WKU One of Just Three Schools in Nation with 35 Conference Championships in Last Five Years

Men’s basketball won four games in four days en route to its Sun Belt Conference Tournament title and the team’s only loss in the last eight games of the season came to top-ranked and eventual national champion Kentucky in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

“Championship Effort” Defined

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CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS IN LAST FIVE YEARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Championship Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun Belt Conference</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain West</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big East</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>MAC</td>
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<td>WAC</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Big 10</td>
<td>18</td>
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By winning the men’s outdoor track and field championship, WKU won its 82nd conference championship since 1999-2000. Fourteen of WKU’s 19 athletic teams have contributed to that total, 12 sports have won multiple titles and eight sports have won five or more championships. The 82 championships are 34 more than the next closest Sun Belt Conference school.

WKU has won the conference’s Bubas Cup four times in the 2000s and is one of only four schools to win the Bubas Cup five or more times in its history. The Bubas Cup, named for the Sun Belt Conference’s first commissioner (Vic Bubas), is awarded annually to the school that accumulates the most points based on its final standings in each of the conference’s 19 sponsored sports.
Following the 2011-12 academic year, the cumulative GPA of all 385 WKU student-athletes is 3.05, and over 200 student-athletes, 54 percent, are maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Eleven of WKU’s 15 sport programs hold a cumulative team GPA of 3.0 or better, and five are at or above 3.4 as a team.

A total of 120 student-athletes have graduated in the last calendar year, with 46 finishing their degrees in December of 2011 and 74 others in May of 2012. Each of WKU’s 19 sports is represented among the 120 student-athletes.

Since 2000, 85% of all student-athletes who have fulfilled their eligibility have graduated.
The women’s soccer team posted the highest team grade point average this academic year for the third time in the last four years. Head coach Jason Neidell’s squad compiled an outstanding 3.62 team GPA as a group.

Jeremy Sites of the track and field and cross country program finished the year with the highest GPA among graduating male seniors, earning Scholar Athlete of the Year recognition along with soccer’s Lindsay Williams.

WKU’s Carol and Denny Wedge Student-Athlete Success Center opened in January of 2009. The 10,000-square foot complex features numerous computer labs, along with break out rooms for WKU student-athletes to study, work on school projects and receive tutorial assistance and academic advising.
WKU Athletics is pleased to be a vital component of the Bowling Green and south-central Kentucky communities, and it prides itself on using its platform to give back to the residents who make up the area.

Hilltoppers With Heart, the official community service program of WKU Athletics, is designed to give WKU student-athletes, coaches and staff the unique opportunity to make an impact in the community by volunteering their time and talent with numerous organizations. Every sport program and nearly every student-athlete has contributed to Hilltoppers With Heart since its inception in July of 2011.
The integration of athletics and academics is a key component of the university. WKU Athletics takes great pride in highlighting university and athletic achievements throughout the WKU campus. Fourteen different groups were recognized at halftime of various football and men’s and women’s basketball games this season.

The WKU campus is also home to the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science, Kentucky’s only residential academy for the most gifted and talented high school juniors and seniors.

The Gatton Academy was named the country’s number-one high school in 2012 by Newsweek magazine, and Bowling Green is also home to Bowling Green High School, which is among the top three percent of all high schools in the nation.

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Beta Gamma Sigma CEBS International Student Teachers The Confucius Institute Distinguished Service Recipients Doctorate of Nurse Practitioner Students Forensics Team Gatton Academy Harlaxton College (study abroad) Honors College Rotaract Club Semester at Sea SKyTeach Spirit Masters Student Government Association
E. A. Diddle Arena was renovated in 2003 with an investment of $33 million, and it now features state-of-the-art video boards, luxury suites, a refurbished playing surface and two practice courts. Courtside LED message boards were added to the arena during the 2010-11 season, and the Hall of History, celebrating WKU’s more than 100 years of rich tradition, is an added attraction on the arena’s second level concourse. In addition, both the men’s and women’s team areas were entirely redesigned in the last year and highlight each program’s rich history.

In the past 10 years, WKU has invested over $3 million in improvements to Nick Denes Field, including the brand new Paul C. Orberson clubhouse that opened prior to the 2010 season. Other improvements include playing surface upgrades, fan-friendly party decks down the baselines and a new speaker system.

The WKU men’s basketball locker room and players lounge were redesigned prior to the 2011-12 season. Each student-athlete has a personalized locker within a unique oval design that can be utilized for film study and instruction. Adjoining the locker room is an expansive players lounge with leather chairs, televisions and computers.
Nearly $50 million has been invested in the recent renovation and expansion of Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium, resulting in the Topper Club level, new locker rooms, meeting rooms, weight rooms and training rooms, along with an expanded academic advising center. The stadium also features club seating, a $1.5 million video replay scoreboard and a state-of-the-art playing surface that was installed in the spring of 2009. WKU has hosted all six Kentucky High School Athletic Association State Championship football games since 2009, resulting in tremendous statewide exposure for the facility and university.

A $2.5 million Phase 1 renovation of the Charles M. Ruter Track and Field Complex was completed in the spring of 2008.

The Bill Powell Natatorium was renovated in the summer of 2009, and the on-campus facility is the site of all WKU home matches.

WKU's softball facility is one of the finest in the Sun Belt Conference and features a new video scoreboard, installed prior to the 2012 season.

WKU hosted the 2010 Sun Belt Conference Soccer Championships and consistently attracts top competition to the WKU Soccer Complex.
During the 2011 season, WKU hosted a home game against Kentucky at LP Field in Nashville, home of the National Football League’s Tennessee Titans, and also welcomed nearly 20,000 fans to Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium for a game against Navy.

For the second year in a row, the Lady Topper basketball program partnered with area school systems for a month of classroom learning which coincided with a daytime women’s basketball game at E.A. Diddle Arena. Over 3,000 children and teachers attended the “Education Day” game on January 4 game against Louisiana-Lafayette to see the team in action and promote synergy between education and athletics.

WKU Athletics takes its programs on the road each spring and summer, as coaches, student-athletes and athletic department staff visit area cities as a part of “Toppers On Tour.” The tour stops allow fans a chance to meet, mingle and have pictures taken with coaches and student-athletes and learn more about the latest happenings in WKU Athletics.
WKU hosted 26 local elementary students at the Charles M. Ruter Track and Field Complex for the “Fastest Kid in Bowling Green” competition during the collegiate Hilltopper Relays. In a partnership that promoted physical fitness and secondary education, physical education classes in the school districts held “preliminary heats” in the 100-meter dash in the spring, and the winners in grade levels 1-3 and 4-6 competed in the “finals” as part of the Hilltopper Relays to determine the “Fastest Kid in Bowling Green.”

A record crowd just shy of 1,000 fans packed the WKU Softball Field on March 21 for the Lady Toppers’ game against Kentucky. The 807 fans more than doubled the stadium seating capacity of 350, and the WKU faithful helped the Lady Toppers give Kentucky all it could handle before dropping a tight 4-2 decision.
The accomplishments of WKU student-athletes reach far and wide regionally and nationally, as the athletic department receives daily coverage in the Bowling Green Daily News and the Louisville Courier-Journal in addition to television and radio coverage in the Nashville, Tenn., area.

The Hilltopper Sports Satellite Network has helped WKU men’s basketball make 152 national television appearances in the last five seasons alone, and arrangements with Fox College Sports, DirecTV and ESPN gave WKU basketball games and coaches shows audiences of 75 million homes in 47 of the nation’s top 50 markets.

WKU has the second-largest radio network in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, with the 15 stations on the Hilltopper IMG Sports Network spanning a 120-mile radius of Bowling Green.

The Hilltopper Sports Satellite Network recently unveiled a brand-new, state-of-the-art $2 million high definition production truck to allow broadcasts in full high definition on-par technically and equipment-wise with any truck ESPN or CBS Sports has available. The Hilltopper Sports Satellite Network partners with the university, WKYU-PBS and WKU Athletics to enable students to gain tremendous experience assisting with top-level television production of athletic events. The WKU School of Journalism and Broadcasting recently ranked fourth in the prestigious national Hearst Journalism Awards.
Over 35,000 alumni, including 7,000 in both Nashville and Louisville, live within 1.5 hours of Bowling Green, helping maintain a close connection with the university after graduation and filling the athletic stadiums in support of the student-athletes and coaches.

WKU is within a five-hour drive of 10 major cities that have a collective metro population of 17.8 million. Close to 300,000 people reside in the 10-county area surrounding WKU.

WKU Athletics operates with a $22 million annual budget and another $5 million in reserves and endowments, and in the last five years giving to the athletic department has increased 87.5 percent from $1.6 million to over $3 million.
WKU Athletics’ annual $22 million budget represents approximately 5% of the university’s overall $389 million budget. WKU Athletics returns this investment with a financial impact on both WKU and south-central Kentucky. National, regional and local media coverage of WKU sporting events results in tremendous exposure for the university and region. The over 100,000 people who attend on-campus sporting events each year help local businesses, hotels and restaurants with their patronage and the resulting increased tax revenue.

WKU hosted the 2012 Sun Belt Conference Baseball Tournament at Bowling Green Ballpark, the downtown home of the Bowling Green Hot Rods, the single-A affiliate of the Tampa Bay Rays.

With wins in its last three NCAA Tournaments, WKU men’s basketball is responsible for generating over $7.5 million in total revenue for the Sun Belt Conference and its members, including nearly $1 million directly to WKU Athletics.

Showcasing the Bowling Green community and south-central Kentucky is a priority for WKU Athletics, and in the last three years WKU has welcomed the rest of the Sun Belt Conference for the cross country, soccer, volleyball, swimming and diving and baseball championships.

WKU’s NCAA Tournament First Four game in Dayton, Ohio, was played in front of President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron and was broadcast on national television with CBS Sports’ top crew of Jim Nantz, Clark Kellogg and Steve Kerr on the call.
WKU football completed the best turnaround in the history of the Sun Belt Conference after going 7-1 in conference play in 2011, with the only loss coming to eventual conference champion Arkansas State. Despite starting the season 0-4 overall, the Hilltoppers rattled off seven wins in their final eight games, losing only to then top-ranked LSU. After just two seasons as WKU head coach, Willie Taggart has the Hilltoppers poised to capture the Sun Belt Conference championship in 2012 after becoming bowl eligible by finishing the 2011 season with a 7-5 record.

The 2011 WKU volleyball team became just the fourth Lady Topper squad to reach the 30-win plateau after finishing the 2011 campaign with a 31-4 record and the program’s fourth Sun Belt Conference championship. The berth in the NCAA Tournament was the sixth in WKU’s history and the second in as many years.

The 2011 WKU soccer team reached the championship game of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament for the second time in the last four years, capping off a 13-6-3 season. A pair of Lady Toppers etched their names in the WKU record books, as Mallory Outerbridge became WKU’s all-time leading point- and goal-scorer, while goalkeeper Libby Stout became the all-time leader in wins and minutes played.
Both the men’s and women’s swimming and diving squads wrapped up second place finishes at the Sun Belt Conference Championships in 2011, and both teams combined to set 12 school records and three conference records during the four-day meet. WKU was honored by CollegeSwimming.com following the season with 14 swimmers given honorable mention All-American awards.

The Ray Harper era got off to a thrilling start following Harper’s appointment as head coach on February 19. The Hilltoppers closed the season winning seven of their final eight games, including four games in four days to become just the second team in the history of the Sun Belt Conference to claim the tournament championship by playing four consecutive days. Harper is the winningest coach in college basketball history, and he and the legendary John Wooden are the only two coaches in NCAA history to coach in six consecutive NCAA National Championship games.

Former Lady Topper standout Michelle Clark-Heard returns to the Hill in 2012-13 to take the reins of the WKU women’s program after spending five years as an assistant coach at the University of Louisville. Clark-Heard has made 11 NCAA Tournament appearances as a Lady Topper player or college assistant coach.
The WKU softball team won 33 games in 2012, giving the Lady Toppers 30 or more wins in three out of the last four years. WKU went 2-2 in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament, falling in extra innings to eventual tournament champion South Alabama. The pair of wins in the conference tournament were the most for the Lady Toppers since winning three and advancing to the conference championship in 2009.

Despite injuries to key players, the WKU baseball team showed grit and determination to make its 14th-consecutive trip to the Sun Belt Conference Baseball Tournament and won a game in the tournament for the 11th time in those 14 trips. Head coach Matt Myers completed his first year at the helm of the Hilltopper program, and he has been instrumental in helping WKU have 15 Major League Baseball draftees in the last four years.

The Hilltopper track and field team wrapped up the Sun Belt Conference’s first men’s triple crown after winning the indoor and outdoor championships along with the cross country championship in 2011-12. The Lady Toppers picked up the conference championship in cross country, which marked the 18th consecutive track and field title for the women’s program at the time.

Both the WKU men’s and women’s tennis squads relied heavily on youth in 2012, getting major contributions from underclassmen. Sophomore Monta Reinfelde anchored the Lady Topper attack from the top spot in doubles and singles, going 29-4 in doubles and singles combined in 2012, including a 15-1 mark in singles play. On the men’s side, three of the top four singles performers were newcomers, including sophomore Josh Smith, who claimed seven wins from the top singles spot in 2012.
championship effort countdown

7,326 fans filled E.A. Diddle Arena for the men’s basketball home finale against Middle Tennessee.

400th career victory for volleyball coach Travis Hudson came on October 28 with a 3-0 sweep of Denver at E.A. Diddle Arena.

1,324 assists for volleyball standout Melanie Stutsman in 2011, which was good for the top mark in the Sun Belt Conference and helped her to All-American honors for the second consecutive season.

294 team total in the final round of the 2012 Sun Belt Conference Men’s Golf Championships for the men’s golf squad, good for the second-best team score in the final round.

120 student-athletes graduated in 2011-12.

58 runs scored in four regular season baseball games played at Bowling Green Ballpark over the last three seasons, good for an average of over 14 runs per game.

33 wins for softball in 2012, giving the Lady Toppers 30 or more wins in three of the last four seasons.

82 Sun Belt Conference championships for WKU since 1999, nearly double the amount of the next closest school.

33 wins for softball in 2012, giving the Lady Toppers 30 or more wins in three of the last four seasons
18 –straight conference championships for the women’s cross country and track and field programs before “The Streak” eventually ended at the 2012 Sun Belt Conference Indoor Track and Field Championships

12 school records set by the men’s and women’s swimming and diving teams at the Sun Belt Conference Championships in February

11 combined NCAA Tournament appearances as a player and assistant coach for new Lady Topper head women’s basketball coach Michelle Clark-Heard

6 of the 22 football seniors in 2012 have already earned their degrees from WKU

7 conference wins for football in 2011, completing the best turnaround in Sun Belt Conference football history after going 2-6 in league play in 2010

3 finishers in the top-5 of the Sun Belt Conference five-mile race for the men’s cross country team in 2011

10 winning seasons for women’s soccer since beginning play in 2001
Jared Andreoli


Bobby Rainey

WKU All-American running back, finished his Hilltopper career ranked 11th in NCAA history in all-purpose yards (6,906) and 41st in career rushing yards (4,542).

Marion Kandie

ended a stellar distance career with an appearance in the NCAA Championships, her second in four years. Kandie helped the Lady Topper program to three consecutive cross country titles, two indoor track and field titles and two outdoor track and field championships and leaves the Hill ranked third in Lady Toppers history in two events.

Monta Reinfelde

completed a fantastic sophomore season that included 20-straight singles and double victories to start the year, becoming the first tennis player in WKU history to accomplish that feat from the number-one position. Reinfelde has 53 combined wins and only 15 defeats in her career entering the 2012-13 season.