

# Though It's Early, Wildcats Are Having Fun

Everyone's Getting In On The Act

What's the one thing that comes to mind when thinking about Kentucky basketball? How about...prestige...a class program...Big Blue pride...or just a plain winner. What about having fun. Fun?

I know, I know. "Notre Dame had fun," recalling the quotes of Joe B. Hall after his Wildcat team captured the NCAA title in 1978, while Digger Phelps' troops lost both games in the Final Four.

Over the past couple of months you've probably read where Eddie Sutton's Wildcats have been having all kinds of fun. And to no surprise, those reports are absolutely correct. But you sort of get the impression that this feeling hasn't been around for too long.

Yes and no.

For the record — 297 wins to be exact — Hall and the Wildcats had some good times during those 13 years he was in charge of THE program. That's not counting his year's as assistant mentor under the legendary Baron of Basketball, Adolph Rupp.



## Nick Nicholas

Cats' Pause Columnist

Winning the national title, an NIT title, tying or outright winning 10 SEC Championships, and knocking off then-undefeated and No. 1 ranked Indiana in the Mideast Regionals (1975) were the 'fun' things that many Wildcat fans remember from the Hall tenure. Although the program was run in a strict-like manner, UK basketball was not all work and no play.

It just seemed that way.

Now, with a new coach things obviously appear different. Sutton is more a 'loopy-goopy' type fellow, but at the same time demands the most out of his players. Hall, on the other hand, is more conservative but like Sutton, required 100-percent from his players.

In life, when we change something we're kind of suspicious of it at first. But if we like the change then the old is sometimes mistakenly forgotten.

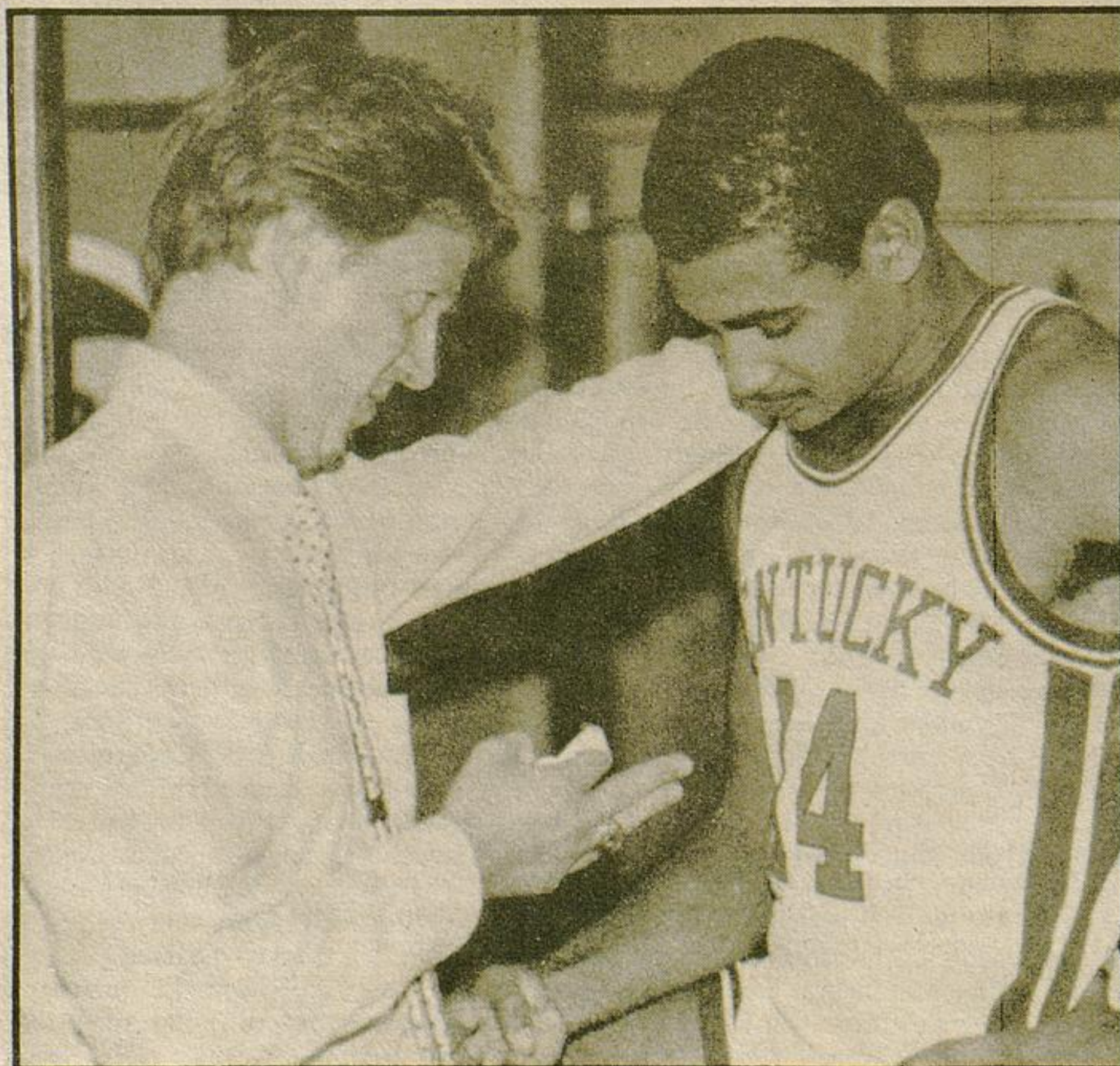
Not that Hall has been forgotten, but it's like all the UK fans are now in Sutton's corner. Favorable changes do that to people.

Not only to the fans but to the players as well.

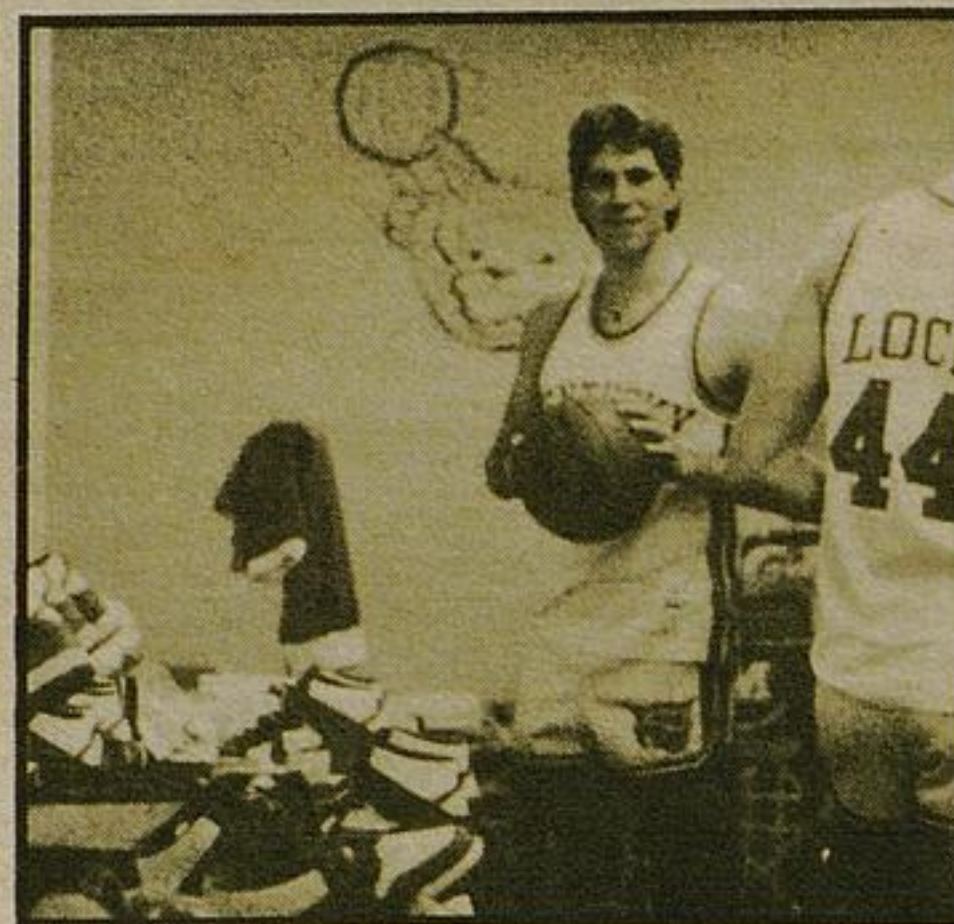
Take for instance Leroy Byrd and Todd Ziegler. When those two checked into a ball game last season it usually meant the contest had been decided. Today everyone, including Byrd and Ziegler, are getting to play more and show the Kentucky faithfuls that they can contribute in game situations.

I guess that's what a change can do.

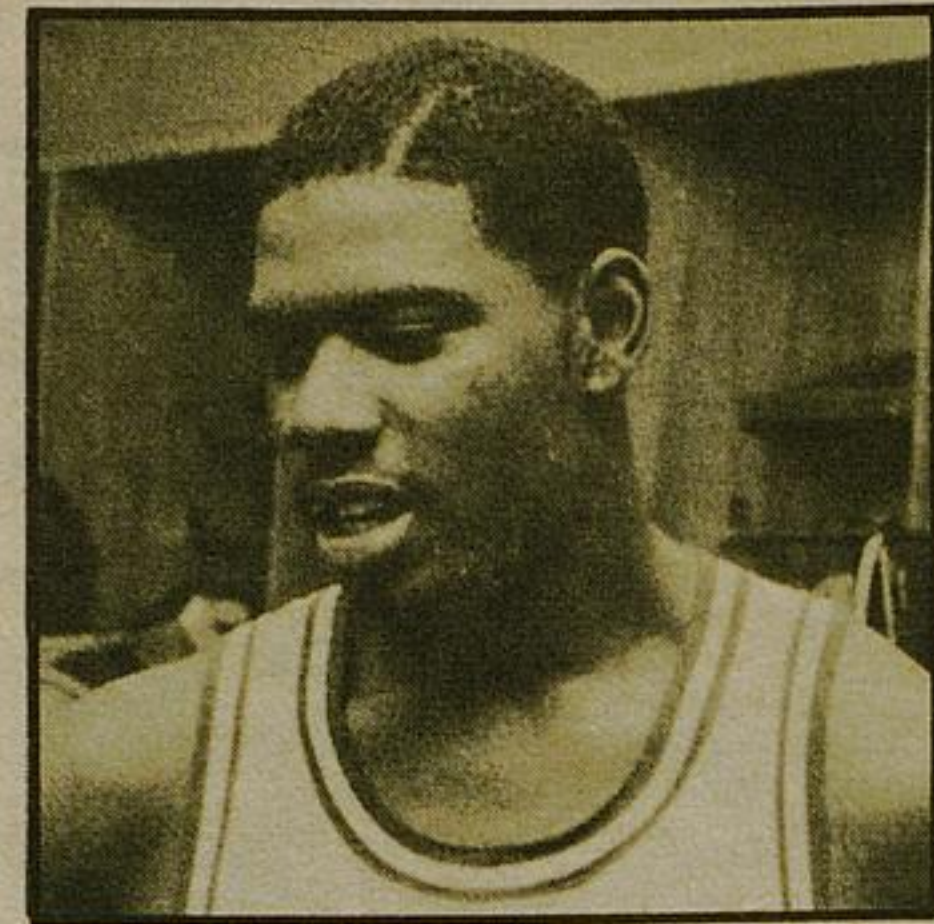
Ziegler said something the other night which was unusual for a second-year reserve to say. Against Cincinnati, Ziegler tossed up a 15-footer from near the baseline that embarrassingly hit the side of the glass. The sophomore, however, coolly sank two long jumpers following the badly missed attempt.



Wayne Breeden Confirming With Andrews



Ziegler



Madison

"Oh I knew I could shoot better than that," Ziegler said following the 84-54 triumph over Cincinnati. "I wasn't going to be afraid to shoot just because of something like that. I've been playing a little better this year and I feel more confident in my game and in my shot. If I had it again I was going to put it back up. And I did."

Last season, Ziegler, though hurt most of the campaign, only tallied two points.

Maybe Ziegler, Byrd or some of the other players have been inspired by the change in itself. The same thing might have happened if the two coaches' roles were reversed — Hall replacing Sutton. Just the change from one leader to another might be significant enough to turn around a player's ability or attitude.

One of Hall's biggest fans even realizes that there is a different feeling among the Wildcats. Seeing a sub score a career-high total might have an influence.

"Everybody's contributing because everybody's playing," noted sophomore Richard Madison. "Everybody's happy to see someone come in like Todd did. You aren't used to seeing that."

The 'Master-Blaster' has nothing but respect for his former collegiate coach. Last season, if you'll remember, Madison was deeply saddened when he learned of Hall's retirement.

So for now, like Madison said everyone is contributing.

"We know that when we come into a game we are expected to play real hard and just continue the way the rest of the players were playing," said reserve guard Paul Andrews. "If we do that we know we're going to get a lot more playing time."

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Far from having fun, Indiana's Bobby Knight made a spectacle of himself prior and during last Saturday's confrontation with Kentucky.

In a pregame interview with Cawood Ledford, Knight answered questions in rude-like fashion.

Knight had no comment in regards to the Steve Alford incident. When asked what he thought about UK's four starters from last year's team, Knight quipped that they'll probably have a year's more experience.

Why can't he answer questions like his other coaching mates?

The controversial Hoosier mentor even had the nerve to say the IU-UK rivalry was, "less special to me than you might think."

If such a rivalry like IU-UK doesn't excite a person, then why coach?

Changing scenes to Rupp Arena, Knight's actions in the first half were ridiculous (although he was somewhat at ease in the second stanza).

Knight tried a psych job on the UK crowd by coming out of the locker room right before team introductions. Though when the controversial figure, decked out in a cherry red sweater, walked onto the court the Wildcat partisans were far from friendly hosts.

Deafening, dull sounding 'boos' could be heard throughout Rupp Arena. And when he was introduced to the record crowd, the noise became even more boisterous.

The crowd's participation probably helped push his already irate temper past the boiling point. But what is it they say, 'If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.'

Well in Bobby Knight's case his kitchen is the coaching business. At least he should consider taking a leave of absence for a year or so.

At the 18:54 mark in the first half, Knight verbally lashed out at one of officials. One of his pupils — Andre Harris — was whistled for pushing UK's Kenny Walker underneath. Much to the disbelief of Knight, the foul did happen. Time after time he was screaming at the three referees, while his counterpart — Eddie Sutton — was reluctantly calm.

This is not to say Sutton was completely at ease. In the second half he was up on occasions stressing his point to the men in striped shirts.

A Indiana-Kentucky game can have that kind of affect on a person.

Said Sutton after the game, "There were several controversial calls both ways. Anytime two teams play with the intensity that the two ball clubs played with tonight, it's going to be awfully tough to officiate the game."

On this night Eddie kept his cool for the most part, Bobby didn't.

Meanwhile, Knight must have worn himself out in the first 20 minutes as he was less 'active' on the sidelines. Early in the second half, however, Knight paced to the end of IU's bench when Winston Morgan's bucket was cancelled out due to Winston Bennett fouling him prior to the shot.

In his postgame comments, Knight did answer a couple of questions about Alford and the NCAA's action. But it got to the point where, "I don't have any other comments on the NCAA. Anybody got any comments on the game?"

Following one question about an IU player, Knight rudely interrupted a reporter's question when the coach said, "Sorry, I've got to get going." Thus left Bobby Knight.

Toward the final moments of the game, Knight stalked the sidelines with a sad look on his face. More and more today it seems that Knight always has that profile — a sad profile.