



## Straight from the Coach

# Q&A With Kentucky Swimming Coach Gary Connelly

**Q.** Looking back on last season, can you comment on your 2004-2005 campaign?

**A.** The men's team had one of the best seasons ever. We finished fourth at the SEC championships and 12th at the NCAA Championships. Three of our relay teams earned All-America distinction, along with Daniel Cruz. We had several honorable mention All-Americans as well. On the women's side, we finished 18th at NAAs. It was the

second-best finish in the program's history. Overall, it was the best season we've ever had combined. It was an outstanding year and everybody was really excited about it. Everybody is even more excited about this upcoming season.

**Q.** How does your squad, especially on the men's side, recover from the loss of so many successful seniors?

**A.** It's going to be difficult to do because the loss of our seniors (Daniel Cruz, Clay Gasparovich, and Tim Patrick) will really hurt our relay teams. The main recovery is going to have to come from our freshman class. Hopefully, the freshmen we recruited are going to be able to step up and swim at a very high level right away. That's asking a lot because some of the guys who graduated developed over the course of time. The women return mostly intact. All of our best divers are coming back. The women should be much improved over last year, which was pretty impressive.



people. Two of our returning sophomores, Grant Nelson and Will Vietti, had outstanding summers. They are swimming fast enough now that they should qualify for the NCAA Championships. We also have a large freshman class that we think is really going to step up. The expectations for the women's team are to keep training hard and stay focused on what they have to do. We have a really good senior class with Shantel Commander, Laura Graham, and Brennan Moore. Shantel and Laura have both been to the NCAA Championships and Brennan is just dying to go. I think they are going to do a really great job. I think our sophomore class, with the Bradfords, Heather and Jenny, and Linsay Myhre, is also going to help propel the team forward. We have some really exciting freshmen coming in as well.

**Q.** How do you describe your coaching style?

**A.** I would say I'm a relatively laid-back coach. I feel you kind of have to let the athletes make their mistakes, so that they can learn for themselves. As a staff, we look to

guide them down the right road, but I want the athletes to be the ones leading the team. I want them out front leading, more so than myself.

**Q.** What are some of the values you stress in your program?

**A.** We really stress working hard and taking responsibility both in the pool and out of the pool. We want the swimmers and divers to know they aren't kids anymore and that they are full-blown adults when they come to this program. We want the athletes to understand when you make mistakes you have to be accountable. We want the individuals on the team to think a little bit harder before they make decisions that might come back to bite them.



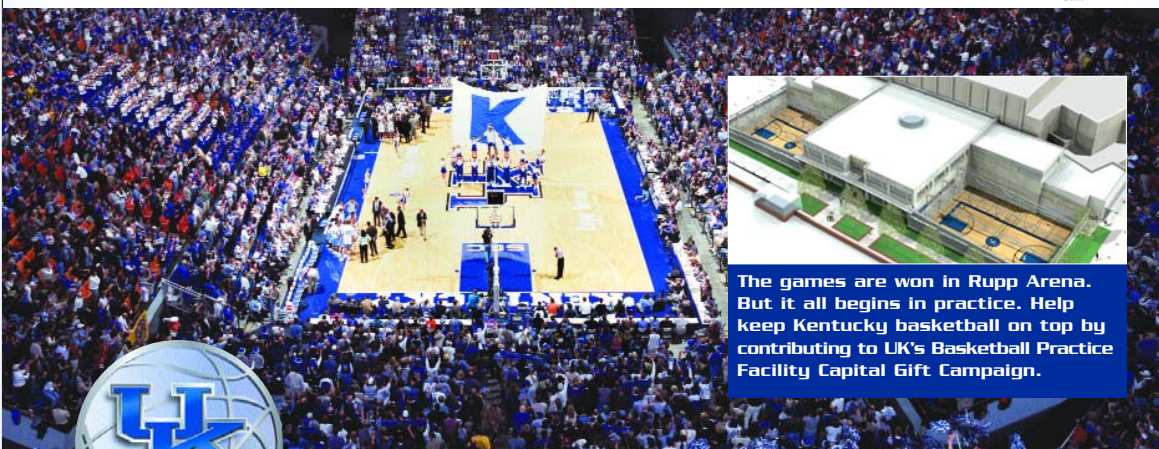
### The Connelly File

**Hometown:** Atwater, Calif.  
**Family:** Married to Kathleen Healey and has two children: Cody and Emily.

**Competitive Highlights:** Member of the 1972 U.S. Olympic Team—participated on the world record-setting 400-meter freestyle relay team; 15-time NCAA All-American at Indiana University; named to IU's Swimming Hall of Fame.

**Coaching Highlights:** Has led the UK men's and women's swimming and diving program to 10 NCAA Top-20 team finishes; has coached 82 All-Americans, five SEC individual champions, two NCAA top-5 individual finishers and three Olympians.

## Practice Makes Perfect ...



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Coming off a sixth-place finish at the 2005 NCAA Championships, the Kentucky rifle team has set its sights on the program's first national championship this year.

"Our goal every year is to compete for the national championship," head coach Harry Mullins said. "Last year we had a very young team and they got a taste of what it's like at the college level. Now, we're ready to take that next step and bring home some hardware."

The Wildcats return everyone from last year's squad, while adding a pair of highly-touted freshmen in Jason Dardas and Andrew Roland. With a number of matches already in the books, the two have led the youthful team to heights it did not reach last season.

So far this year, UK has consistently topped its highest score from a year ago. Dardas has been the team's top shooter, averaging better than 587 on smallbore and 583 on air rifle (out of a possible 600).

Meanwhile returnees Ray Geyer, Amy Sowash and Vicki Goss have joined the two freshmen to give Kentucky a lineup reminiscent of the teams that finished among the nation's top three seven times in the 10 years from 1994-2003.

"We are very excited about the team we have coming back," Mullins said. "We only lost one shooter, but I feel like we've replaced him with two very strong competitors in Andrew and Jason."

The 2005-06 national championship takes place in Colorado Springs, Colo., from March 9-11.



After making its first NCAA Regional appearance since 2002 last season, the 2006 University of Kentucky gymnastics squad returns 12 roster members to a squad that enjoyed a 14-win output - its highest since 1993 - and a top national ranking of No. 10 in 2005. Third-year head coach Mo Muhammad's team will feature a balanced attack and plenty of depth. Top returnees include senior Lucy Burgin and juniors Krystle Cook and Rachel Riley. Burgin finished tied for fifth on vault at last season's NCAA Regional meet with a career-high mark of 9.85. Cook led UK on bars and vault with season averages of 9.748 and 9.740, respectively, and posted a 9.9 on the floor versus Denver (fifth all-time at UK). Riley was UK's top all-around performer at the 2005 SEC Championships.

The roster's stock continues to strengthen as the Cats welcome aboard incoming freshmen Heather Hite, Ashley

Armour and Natalie Rubinstein. Also joining the UK family is former Olympic Gymnastics Force coach and independent consultant, Jackie McCarter, who begins her first season as an assistant coach. McCarter brings more than 20 years of experience to her new post.

Academically, the squad continued to make impressive strides last season, reaching a team cumulative grade point average of 3.39. Of the team's 16 gymnasts on the 2005 roster, 13 earned a GPA of 3.0 or higher, while seven of those finished above a 3.5. Two gymnasts garnered 4.0 GPAs, including recent graduate Krista Prestigiacomo and senior Bethany Strauch.

UK hosts five home meets in 2006, including the season opening "Excite Nite," Jan. 14, at Memorial Coliseum. All the pieces look to be in place as the team continues its rapid growth and sets their sights on a 2006 NCAA Championships berth.

**Don't Miss Excite Nite!**  
January 14, 2006

## track and field

As head coach Don Weber begins his 21st season in Lexington and boasts a roster balanced with experience and youth as the Cats' track and field squads look to push towards the conference elite. UK welcomes



back eight returnees who scored at last season's SEC outdoor meet and 18 newcomers in what expects to be a breakthrough season.

On the women's side, senior and three-time All-SEC cross country performer Allison Grace will once again carry the distance duties after finishing third in the 10,000 meters at last season's SEC Championships. Joining Grace will be junior Georganne Way (800m) and sophomore Liliane Sparkes (1,500m), who also scored points for the Cats. Ildiko Varga will compete in her final season as a Wildcat and already has earned All-America and All-SEC honors. Varga placed seventh at the 2004 NCAA outdoor meet and is currently the UK school record holder in the discus. Also expected to contribute are high jumper junior Rachel Kohler (PR, 5-8.75, fifth all-time at UK) and 800-meter runner sophomore Lavera Morris (PR, 2:09.75). The Cats incoming class is highlighted by three aerial jumpers; pole vaulters Maggie Tincher from Scott Depot, W.Va., Owensboro, Ky., native Mary Chris Durham and high jumper Lindsey Moody from Lindsay, Ind.

The men's squad will be anchored by multi-talented junior Andy Fryman who scored at the shot put and discus for the Cats at last season's SEC outdoor meet. Backing Fryman is sophomore sprinter Justin Harrison, whose 46.72 400-meter indoor mark ranks second all-time at UK. Middle-distance standout junior John Richardson returns to UK after a brief stint at Villanova. Richardson served as Kentucky's top cross country runner in the fall and placed third in the mile at last year's Big East Championships. Sophomore Gabe McLaren (800m) and senior Dedrick Tillerson (400m hurdles) both scored for the Cats at the SEC meet, while the Cats' 4x400m relay team is also expected to contribute. Newcomer Gavin Ball will be a welcomed addition after winning the shot put at last season's Texas Relays while at Kansas. Freshman Jose Acevedo looks to improve the Cats' sprinting attack.



## Meet the Cats



### Justin Harrison

CLASS: Sophomore SPORT: Track and Field

**W**ith a phenomenal freshman campaign under his belt, sophomore Justin Harrison returns as one of Wildcats' top sprinters for the 2006 season. Last season at the 2005 SEC Indoor Championships, Harrison qualified for the men's 400-meter final with a personal-best and NCAA provisional qualifying mark of 46.72. With that time, Harrison also broke the freshman school record of 47.08 and owns the second-fastest 400-meter indoor time in Kentucky history.

"Justin surprised a lot of people last season with his eagerness to compete," UK assistant coach Erin Tucker said. "He came in last season and was willing to run against the best in the country. It was very impressive to see that type of attitude out of a freshman."

Harrison was also a key fixture on the Cats' relay teams, running the lead leg on UK's top indoor and outdoor 4x400 meter teams last season.

"Justin is extremely easy to motivate and showed last season that he has a high ceiling of potential," said Tucker. "He wants to be the best and has a clear understanding of what it takes. Justin has a rare combination of desire and potential."

#### The Harrison File

Favorite place to vacation: Orlando, Florida

Who would you most like to meet? 2005 World Outdoor 100-meter and 200-meter champion Justin Gatlin.

Most memorable sports moment: Coming back from sixth place to finish second in the 4x400 meter relay at the state meet my junior year as a prep.

One lesson my parents taught me: My dad taught me to never do anything he wouldn't do.



### Steven Manley

CLASS: Senior SPORT: Swimming

**E**ntering his final year as a Wildcat, Steven Manley—already one of the most decorated swimmers in Kentucky history—is looking to cap his career with his best-ever showing at the 2006 NCAA championships.

Last season, The Dublin, Ireland native captured All-America honors at NCAAs in the 200, 400, and 800 freestyle relays and honorable mention All-America honors in the freestyle.

The 2005 team captain has also already left his mark on the Kentucky swimming and diving record book. He owns UK records in the 200 and 500 freestyle, the 200 individual medley, and is member of the record-holding 800 freestyle relay.

Thrilled to have Manley back for one more season, UK head swimming coach Gary Connelly believes the senior will be determined to achieve even more.

"As good as Steven has been, I think he has gotten it into his head that, unless he makes it into the final eight at the NCAA championships and is an All-American, he is going to feel like he came up short," Connelly said. "I'd be really surprised if he loses a dual meet this year and I'd be really surprised if he is not in the top eight at the NCAA Championships."

#### The Manley File

Who would you most like to meet? Muhammad Ali

Favorite place to vacation: Seychelles

Favorite TV show: Family Guy

Most memorable sports moment: Last season's 400 freestyle relay at the NCAA Championships

The last book I read for fun was: The Da Vinci Code

### Ravi Moss

CLASS: Senior SPORT: Basketball

**I**f Chuck Hayes was the heart of last year's Kentucky team, then perhaps it can be said that Ravi Moss is the team's soul.

How else do you explain it? The senior has provided leadership to the Kentucky squad since he first stepped on campus. He puts everything he has on the floor every time he checks into a game. He works harder than most in practice, in the classroom, in the weight room—practically everywhere. And he does it all as a walk-on.

Perhaps the most vocal leader on this Kentucky squad, Moss knows the importance of putting on the Kentucky uniform. He grew up just hours from the UK campus in Hopkinsville, where he lived basketball from a young age. He looked up to hometown hero Greg Buckner, who had an illustrious career at Clemson and is now a free agent with the Denver Nuggets. He soaked up all he could from Buckner and others and he dreamed big. Those dreams brought him to Kentucky.

Attending UK wasn't a tough choice for Moss coming out of high school. Both of his parents, Austin and Teresa, earned their degrees from the university, and his two older sisters followed in their footsteps. He had the opportunity to see what life would be like as a student-athlete for the Wildcats as his brother-in-law, George Massey, played football for the Cats for four years. When Moss was offered the chance from Tubby Smith to join the team as a walk-on, he jumped. It was a Kentucky boy's dream come true. And watching closely was his brother, Austin, who is a freshman walk-on with the UK football team.

#### The Moss File

Favorite TV show: Nip/Tuck

Most memorable sports moment: Going undefeated in the SEC my freshman year

If a movie was made about you, who would you want to portray you? Denzel Washington

The last book I read for fun was: The Brethren, by John Grisham

What would you like to be doing 10 years from now? Rich, retired and playing golf every day





## Taryn Ignacio

CLASS: Junior SPORT: Diving

Calling last season a successful one for junior diver Taryn Ignacio is an understatement. When looking back at last season's accomplishments, words like spectacular and historic are perhaps more fitting.

Ignacio, a Florida State transfer from Richmond, Ky., became the first Wildcat diver to capture multiple conference titles in a single meet and is the first member of the Kentucky swimming and diving program to win more than one title at an SEC meet since former All-American and Olympic champion Rachel Komisarz did in 1999.

Ignacio took the platform and the one-meter title last February. She combined with then-junior Jessica Thompson, who won the women's three-meter event, to give UK its first sweep of the conference diving championships in school history.

With two more years of eligibility remaining, the future is bright for this Wildcat diver.

"She's done everything great at the conference level," UK head diving coach Mike Lyden said. "Taryn is going to feel the pressure of being a returning SEC champion, but I think she can handle it."

In preparing to defend her titles, Ignacio will be challenged by great competition from not only the conference, but also from the Wildcat diving program. Kari Retrum, returning from a redshirt season, and Thompson, a fellow SEC title holder, make Lyden confident that Ignacio will be pushed all season long.

While being an SEC champion may be good enough for some, Ignacio has her sites set on leaving her mark at the NCAA championships.

### The Ignacio File

Who would you most like to meet? Greg Louganis

Favorite place to vacation: California

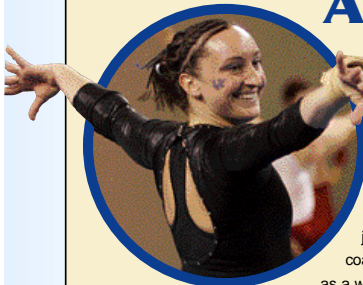
Most memorable sports moment: Winning the SEC Championships last season

My advice to youngsters is: Stay positive

The last book I read for fun was: Honeymoon by James Patterson

## Lucy Burgin

CLASS: Senior SPORT: Gymnastics



After enjoying a breakout 2005 campaign, senior Lucy Burgin returns as one of the key components of this season's University of Kentucky gymnastics squad. The outspoken leader is expected to help lead a UK squad that returns 12 roster members after reaching a top national ranking of No. 10 in 2005.

"Lucy has come a long way since joining our program," UK assistant coach Tom Haley said. "After coming to us as a walk-on, her contributions last season helped her earn a scholarship. We are excited to see her continue to build on last season's success."

The Birmingham, Ala. native's top performance last season came in her home state versus Auburn when she helped the team with a 9.7 on vault, 9.75 on bars, 9.7 on beam and a 9.625 on floor. Burgin's outstanding performances in the all-around and on bars led her to the medal stand where she placed third in both events. Burgin rose to the occasion again in the postseason, finishing tied for fifth at last year's NCAA Regional meet with a career-best 9.85 mark on the vault.

"Lucy is everything you could want in a student-athlete," Haley said. "She has an excellent work ethic and is a leader in the gym and in the classroom."

### The Burgin File

Who would you most like to meet? Abraham (from the Bible)

Most memorable sports moment: Sticking the beam landing at Auburn last season

Favorite place to vacation: Destin, Florida

If you won the lottery, what is the first thing you would buy?

I would go shopping and buy a lot of clothes

One lesson my parents taught me is: Be nice and respectful of others

## Samantha Mahoney

CLASS: Sophomore SPORT: Basketball

Kentucky guard Samantha Mahoney is entering only her second season as a member of the women's basketball team, but you wouldn't know it from her play on the court.

Mahoney, who started 27 games her freshman season and led the team in conference games with an average of 12.5 points per game, will look more like a veteran when the UK Hoops team tips off its 2005-06 season Nov. 18 vs. IUPUI.

"I had a great opportunity last year that a lot of freshmen don't get," Mahoney said. "I just wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to help my team anyway I could."

Mahoney, the runner-up for the 2004 Miss Basketball honor in Michigan, arrived in the Bluegrass last fall from Detroit with aspirations of leading the Wildcats to newfound success.

"When I was making my college decision, I wanted to go somewhere to help build a program and start something special," Mahoney said. "Last year, we had a great run in the WNIT, and this year we want to make it to the NCAA Tournament."

And while Mahoney, who was named to the 2005 Southeastern Conference All-Freshman team, enjoyed a banner first year, the Motor City native plans to concentrate on helping the team's incoming freshmen do the same this season.

"We have a young team this year," Mahoney said. "I think I need to take more of a leadership role to help those freshmen. I just tell them that they need to play hard and do their best."

### The Mahoney File

Most memorable sports moment: Advancing to the Michigan high school final four after starting the season with a 10-10 record

One lesson my parents taught me is: To stay strong in everything I do.

Only the strong survive.

My advice to youngsters is: Find something you like to do and stay involved with it.

The last book I read for fun was: The Coldest Winter Ever, by Sister Soulja

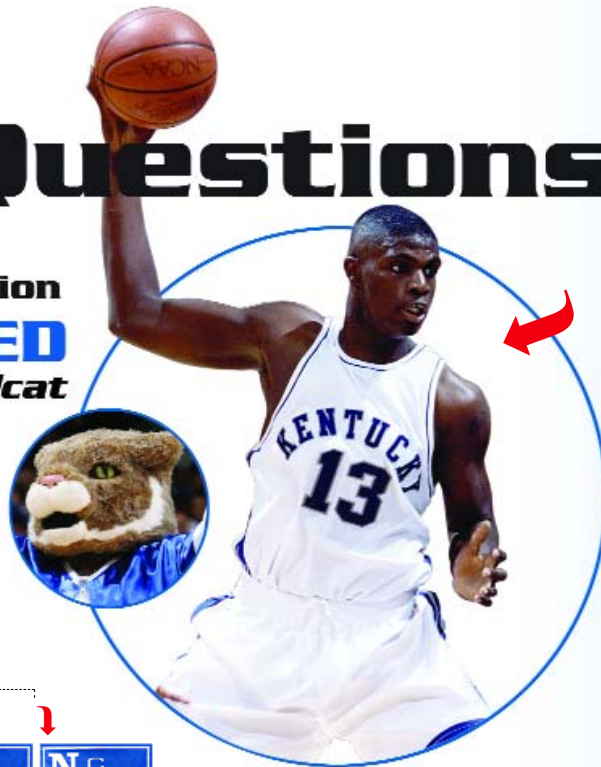
What would you like to be doing 10 years from now? Have a family and successful business career





# 10 Burning Questions

Featuring NBA World Champion **NAZR MOHAMMED** with the Wildcat



1. WC: What do you get recognized more for, being a Wildcat or being a Spur?  
NM: Definitely being a Wildcat.



2. WC: What's better: two NCAA titles or one World Championship?  
NM: They are both so different. When I was at Kentucky, winning two NCAA titles was the highlight of my life. Now, the NBA title is the highlight of my pro career."

3. WC: Derek Anderson signed with the Rockets before the start of the 2005-06 NBA season, giving them two former Wildcats. Which of your former college teammates would you most like to play with in San Antonio?  
NM: My friend, Antoine Walker. I would love to play with him before my career is over.



4. WC: What team(s) do you root against?  
NM: I don't root against any teams, but there are individual players I root for.



5. WC: How do you keep up with the Wildcats during the season?  
NM: DirectTV and the NCAA package. I watch every game and I TIVO the ones I miss so I can watch them later. Last season, I also talked to Chuck Hayes and Kelenna Azubuike a lot.



6. WC: You have a home in Lexington. What do you like most about the town?  
NM: The laid-back pace, even though it is a college town. I like to do normal things. There are a couple of restaurants I like to go to, but mostly I like to have friends and family over to the house and cook out.



7. WC: Do you have any phobias?  
NM: I am not afraid of anything, but I am not a daredevil either. I don't like spiders, but I'm not really afraid of them. I guess there are a lot of things I don't like, but I am not really afraid of them.



8. WC: Since you are a golfer, if you had one mulligan for your career, what would it be?  
NM: If I had one "do-over," I would have stayed for my senior year at Kentucky.

9. WC: Who has the best stare: Greg Popovich or Tubby Smith?  
NM: That's a tie; they're neck and neck.



10. WC: Biggest rivalry: UK vs. Louisville or Spurs vs. Mavs?  
NM: Easy, UK vs. Louisville.  
WC: OK, UK vs. Louisville or Spurs vs. Pistons?  
NM: UK vs. Louisville!



# A Special Kind of Cat

By Sean Cartell

If one were to look up the term student-athlete in Kentucky's football media guide, the name Jeremiah Drobney might be at the core of the definition. Since arriving on UK's campus in the fall of 2001 from his hometown of Massillon, Ohio, Drobney has more than excelled in both spheres of his life.

A three-year letterwinner with the Wildcats, Drobney has played in 33 career games on the gridiron. Away from the field, he has already received his bachelor's degree in finance as a three-time SEC Academic Honor Roll selection. And yet, Drobney knows there is more to being a student-athlete than just sports and studies.

The fifth-year senior is one of the squad's most active members in the community. He volunteers his time assisting with a number

of worthy causes, including the Shriner Children's Hospital, the Big Blue Blast and the Boys' and Girls' Club.

"It feels really good to help out at these community events," Drobney said. "Whenever there's a community service opportunity and I'm available, I try to participate as much as I can. These people support us and we



"We are here to go to school and get an education first and foremost. I feel like serving the community is part of that education."

— Jeremiah Drobney

really want to give back to them."

UK's Outreach Coordinator, Martina Martin, who oversees the service activities of the school's student-athletes, lauds Drobney for his community awareness.

"Jeremiah is an outstanding student-athlete who has contributed a great deal to the Lexington community," Martin said. "He shows exceptional character and a strong desire to help those around him."

Drobney has been recognized for his gen-

erosity in the community by being named to the university's prestigious Frank G. Ham Society of Character for his commitment to academics, athletics, and community service. He also represents UK on the 2005 Southeastern Conference Good Works Team.

"It really means a lot to be named to the Good

Works Team," Drobney said. "It's really an honor. Just like being named an All-SEC academic selection, this honor means that you have given it your all in the community."

Drobney feels that fulfilling service responsibilities is only part of the equation of success as a student-athlete.

"It all comes together with community service," he said. "We are here to go to school and get an education first and foremost. I feel like serving the community is part of that education."

Drobney, who lists working with the Shriner Children's Hospital as one of his favorite service activities, knows that his role as a Kentucky football player is much bigger than catching passes in Commonwealth Stadium on Saturdays.

"You have to accept being a role model when you're an athlete at UK," Drobney said. "I just try to do the best I can to excel in football, the community and academically."

Sean Cartell is a sophomore integrated strategic communications major from Gainesville, Fla.



Compliance Corner with Sandy Bell

## Did You Know ... NCAA Provides Financial Assistance to Student-Athletes

In a culture in which it is very popular to criticize the NCAA National Office and the fine people who work there, let's take the opportunity in this column to publicize some of the lesser-known student-athlete welfare efforts of this organization. Specifically, I would like to discuss the mechanisms the NCAA has instituted to provide financial assistance directly to the student-athletes.

A full athletics scholarship is limited to the payment of tuition, room, meals, fees and required course-related books. Many families are in a financial situation in which it is difficult for them to provide their student-athlete with the additional funds they need to live away from home (travel to and from home, laundry, entertainment, etc.). These student-athletes can qualify for federal funds up to \$4,000 per year (in addition to their full scholarship) through the Pell Grant program. The Compliance Office in the Athletics Department assists UK student-athletes with the preparation of the forms necessary to qualify for this grant. Last year, over 85 student-athletes qualified for this assistance.

In addition to the Pell Grant program, the NCAA allocates over \$11.3 million each year from the proceeds of the men's basketball tournament for the NCAA Special Assistance Fund.

This fund can be accessed by qualified student-athletes for clothing (winter coat, travel blazer, etc.); non-cosmetic dental expenses (UK can pay if a student-athlete's tooth is knocked out in practice but this pays for fillings, etc.); medical expenses that are not athletically related (UK pays for those that are); and travel to and from their home in case of emergency. All of the approximately \$40,000 which was allocated to UK last year was distributed to UK student-athletes.

Two years ago, the NCAA instituted another student-athlete welfare program called the Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund. This assistance can be used by any scholarship student-athlete for personal, educational or medical expenses incurred during the year. In 2004-05, the athletics department allocated over \$107,000 to UK student-athletes from this NCAA sponsored fund. Over \$21.7 million will be provided to student-athletes across the country this year.

Go Cats!